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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Fourth Session of the Eleventh Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Eighty-first Volume.

COMPRISING THE PERIOD FROM
AUGUST 15 TO SEPTEMBER 5, 1893.



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NEW ZEALAND.

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES.

Fourth Session of the Eleventh Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 15th August, 1893.

First Readings—Second Reading—Intoxicating Liquors (Supply to Children) Bill—Otago Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Fencing Bill—Public Domains Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Electoral Bill, Mokoreta Cemetery Reserve Bill.

SECOND READING.

Agricultural and Pastoral Societies Bill.

INTOXICATING LIQUORS (SUPPLY TO CHILDREN) BILL.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he did not think it necessary to make any lengthy remarks. The Bill contained only two clauses, and no doubt honourable gentlemen were perfectly well aware of its contents.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY would ask his honourable friend, before the Bill was read a second time, to seriously consider the provisions of it. The Bill was a very peculiar one. There was a Bill on the Order Paper in another place dealing with the control of liquors, and he thought that a Bill of this character should not be introduced by a private member. He would ask him to seriously consider the effect of the Bill. He was very clear with regard to the position they occupied in objecting to its provisions. He would be glad to see children not allowed to be supplied with liquor, but he thought it his duty to call the attention of the Council to the provisions contained in the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS might say that if the Council refused to pass the Bill it would place itself in a peculiar position. A similar Bill to this was introduced by himself in 1888, and the provisions of it were carried by twenty-two to nine, the Attorney-General, of course, voting with the minority of nine. He was not

at all astonished to find him opposing the Bill on the present occasion.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he was not opposing it.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the Council should satisfy itself, before refusing to pass the Bill, that it was one that should not be passed. He might say the Bill of 1888 had not passed the other branch of the Legislature, and he thought the Council had better pass this one now. As to the necessity for the Bill, he thought no one could deny that. He had, on various occasions, seen young children, in very inclement weather and at very late hours at night, going into publichouses with baskets to get beer for their drunken parents at home. The reasons for the Bill were so strong that, in the interests of humanity, the Council ought to pass it without the least hesitation, more especially as a similar Bill had been passed before by the large majority of twenty-two to nine.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY asked if this was the same Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said it was almost the same Bill.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said it appeared to him that the Bill should not be rejected in any summary manner, because he was strongly of opinion that a measure of the kind was absolutely required, inasmuch as any legislation that might be proceeding in another Chamber might not be successful in reaching that Council this session. It appeared to him that the Bill should not be now rejected. If the Bill were put into anything like reasonable shape it might be productive of very much good. It was nothing less than a public scandal to see young children going into a publichouse for liquor, and the sooner it was put an end to the better. He should support the second reading, and hoped that in Committee some amendments would be introduced to make it more reasonable than at present. To disqualify the property upon which a license had been paid, especially as the property might be held by a temporary occupant, in the extreme manner in which it was proposed under

the Bill seemed to be perfect confiscation. It was to apply, also, under circumstances which did not permit the owner of the property to protect himself in any way whatever. If that were altered, and some other amendments were made, the Bill might be safely considered as a distinct improvement on the existing law, and he should support the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND thought that the fact that there might be another Bill on the same subject before another branch of the Legislature was no argument at all against the Council considering the Bill brought forward by the honourable gentleman. It might be an argument in favour of its postponement for a time. He liked the Bill because there was nothing quixotic in it: it did not attempt to make grown-up people virtuous by Act of Parliament. It merely went to protect those who were unable to protect themselves. He often saw children, especially Maori children, inside a publichouse, and it was very desirable the Legislature should do something to make it punishable to allow children of a tender age to go inside a publichouse. He only wished that the Bill went a little further and prohibited any woman from being served in a publichouse. He did not know in how many of the United States it was illegal, but there public opinion was against women being served, and no women were seen in the States at the bars. He should support the second reading.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN thought that the Bill ought to go to the second reading, but he did not think it should go any further until the Council saw what the Government Bill was. The principle of the Bill was perfectly right, and publicans should be prohibited from selling liquor to children. It was a very great abuse at present, and did a great deal of mischief. At the same time, the 3rd clause was bristling with the most severe penalties—penalties which the Council should hesitate to inflict. He thought a good many honourable members would be glad to vote for the second reading, on the understanding that the Bill did not go any further for the present. The question had better be dealt with by the Government in the general licensing-law of the colony. But, if no Bill was likely to come forward during the session that would give satisfaction, he would rather see this Bill passed than none.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN thought that the licensing-law contained a provision prohibiting the sale of liquor to children under the age of sixteen years. It was quite clear that that was the law; yet the Council were asked to amend it by another Act of a precisely similar nature. As to the fact stated by the Hon. Mr. Scotland, that he had seen young children served with liquor—

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND said he had seen them inside a publichouse.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN supposed they might reasonably infer that they were there for the purpose of being served. In that case, if the existing laws were enforced by the police, there would be no necessity for adding to it, especially in the severe manner proposed by

the Bill. He quite admitted that there could be no possible objection to allowing it to go through another stage.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said the essence of the Bill was contained in the 2nd section. Now, children might be really fifteen, sixteen, or seventeen years of age, but apparently they might not be thirteen. Who was to decide as to the age of a child? From its appearance the publican might think it was over thirteen. The Magistrate might say that the child was under thirteen. It would be extremely difficult to get a conviction, because it might be impossible to tell from the appearance of a child whether it was thirteen, fourteen, or fifteen. The principle of the Bill he agreed with, but he could not help thinking that it had been drawn by some reformer who had allowed his zeal to outrun his discretion. If the Bill passed its second reading it would require to be very carefully watched in Committee.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said, with reference to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Scotland, who stated that he had seen young children going to get beer for their parents, that it was the custom in every country, as honourable members were aware, for men to get a pot of beer at their dinner. As the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn had stated, there was a law on the statute-book now. The present proposal was a great deal more drastic, but if made law there would be a difficulty with regard to ascertaining the age of a child. It was the same in regard to every law where the offence turned upon the question of age, and instead of modifying it might prejudice the law. The penalties in the Bill were severe, and in amount were grossly in excess of what was reasonable. The suspension of a man's license, also, was a thing which, as one honourable gentleman had said, indicated that the Bill must have been introduced by some person who was something more than an enthusiast in the temperance question. It would be the duty of the Council, before the Bill went through, to remedy these defects in Committee. The suggestion made—to allow the Bill to go to a second reading, and then postpone it until the Government Bill appeared—was a good one. The question of little children going for a pot of beer was a very different question from people getting the beer required for their sustenance. In many parts of the world beer was as essentially a part of the sustenance of man as meat. There might be conditions put in the Bill as to the definition of a child, and the hours during which they could be served.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR wished to point out to the Council that there was a very important difference between the 166th section of the Licensing Act and the Bill that was now before the Council. It would be noticed that section 166 referred merely to cases where liquor was sold to be consumed upon the premises. Now, the abuse that he understood was to be done away with by the Bill was an entirely different one—namely, of young children haunting publichouses who were sent by their parents and others to procure liquor to be

staken home. That was an entirely different abuse from that met by section 166, which said, "Any licensed person who allows to be supplied in his licensed premises, by purchase or otherwise, to be consumed on the premises, any description whatever of spirits," and so on. The words "to be consumed on the premises" were the important part of that section, and members of the Council would notice that those words did not appear in this Bill. The Bill was a much more important one than one would infer from the remarks made by the Hon. Mr. Pharazyn. With regard to the suggestion made by the Hon. the Attorney-General, that there was no occasion for the Bill to be proceeded with, inasmuch as there was a Bill on the subject of licensing before the other branch of the Legislature, he (Mr. MacGregor) thought that was not a reason why the Bill should not be read a second time, at all events. They had no certainty that the Bill referred to by the Attorney-General would ever reach that Chamber, to say nothing as to the uncertainty as to whether it would become law. Then, they had no assurance that the Bill would contain any of the provisions embodied in the Bill before the Council. They had merely the intimation that it was a Bill dealing with the liquor question. No doubt there had been valid objections raised to the Bill. Many of those objections were on points of form, and they might probably be overcome in Committee. He would support the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. KERR entirely agreed with the principle of the Bill. He thought there was no more unseemly sight than that of young children standing at the doors of publichouses with bottles in their hands waiting to take beer away to their parents. As he considered the object good, he would vote for the second reading. He could not, however, see his way to agree to some of the clauses, and he trusted the Bill would go to Committee, so that the objectionable clauses might be expunged. For instance, he would point out that under this Bill the proprietor of a house was entirely given into the hands of the licensee, who might, through some spite or some dispute, run the proprietor into the meshes of the law wantonly and knowingly for the purpose of injuring him. The publican might supply liquor to children under the age of thirteen years to get the owner of the premises into trouble. He would like to see the Bill altered so that the punishment might fall on the person who supplied the liquor to the children. He would vote for the second reading, as he believed in the principle of preventing children being made a means of communication in the purchase of liquor.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK agreed with the Bill so far as the principle was concerned. An honourable gentleman had said that the essence of the Bill was contained in the 2nd clause, and he entirely agreed with that; but the essence contained in the 3rd clause mixed with the other made the whole a nauseous concoction. He thought the Council should pass the second reading of the Bill, and refer it to a

Committee, in order that some of the clauses which were objectionable might be struck out.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS would like to say a word or two in support of the second reading. His honourable friend Mr. Scotland, in his travels, had noticed the fact that Maori children were sent by their parents to get liquor. It was an unfortunate fact that many white children were also sent with bottles to publichouses for liquor, and he thought that every effort should be made to put a stop to such a pernicious practice. He had known instances of children being sent in the late hours of the night to bring liquor home to their parents, and he thought the licensee, under such circumstances, for supplying small children, was deserving of the severest censure. He would vote for the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY thought the proper way of dealing with the Bill was to adjourn the debate for the time being, because there was at that time a Bill dealing with the licensing question in another place, and he himself had heard the Premier declare that the Government were to bring in a Bill to deal with the liquor question. He thought that any Bill of this sort should, if possible, be brought in on the responsibility of the Government, and not by a private member. That was the only way in which the interests of the whole community could be served. He therefore moved, *That this debate be adjourned.*

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND would suggest to his honourable friend that it would be meeting the views of the Council if he withdrew his motion for adjournment, and allowed the principle to be affirmed. He thought the feeling of the Council was in favour of reading the Bill a second time, thus affirming the principle, and then letting the matter stand over to see what action was being taken in another place.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said it would be in the recollection of the Council that when the Bill first came to that Chamber there was no one in charge of it, and when the Hon. the Speaker asked if any one was in charge of the Bill, no one answering, he agreed to take charge of it out of respect to honourable members of the other Chamber. At that time he was not aware of what the Bill contained, but he had since consulted the promoter of the measure and informed him that he had taken charge of the Bill. The promoter of the Bill had given him permission to propose certain alterations, as he (Mr. Shrimski) looked upon the measure as being of a somewhat severe character. He was, however, entirely in the hands of the Council in this matter, and he had the consent of the promoter to allow of any reasonable alterations in the Bill. He left it to the Council to accept the second reading or otherwise.

Bill read the second time.

OTAGO HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

Progress in Committee having been reported on this Bill,

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, *That the further consideration of the Bill be made an order of the day for Thursday.*

The Hon. Mr. RICHARDSON suggested that it should be made Friday. It might be necessary to obtain the evidence of the officers of the Board, in order that the Council should obtain information as to what moneys had been spent on local improvements.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER would point out that the Committee to whom the matter had been referred had made its report, and, if the Council desired that the Committee should give the Bill further consideration, it would be necessary that the Committee should be revived, or another Committee appointed.

The question was proposed, "*That the further consideration of the Bill be made an order of the day for Friday.*"

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND moved, as an amendment, *That the Bill be sent back for reconsideration to the Committee that reported on it originally.*

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS begged to second the amendment. He trusted that the Committee, when going into the question again, would ascertain how the borrowed money had been spent, and, in the case of plant that had been sold, how the money had been accounted for. He knew that at the present time the Board had very great difficulty in meeting current expenses out of revenue. He did not for a moment say that the bondholders would suffer, as they had ample security. He did not think that that Harbour Board, or any Harbour Board, should be allowed to expend the money raised by debentures on plant or improvements, and then to sell any portion of these and utilise the money for revenue purposes. At the present time they had the dredge belonging to the Otago Harbour Board, and which cost nearly £22,000. If they sold it the money would, no doubt, be put to the Revenue Account, and be expended as ordinary revenue. It should be for the Committee to ascertain what amount had been devoted to the plant, and how the money obtained from plant that had been sold had been accounted for.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY mentioned that, if this report was referred back, the Committee would have to be set up again by assent of the Council, or else by notice of motion.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR had a remark to make regarding what the Hon. Mr. Reynolds had said regarding the dredge. He was not aware that there was any reason for thinking that the Board would devote the proceeds from the sale of any plant to its ordinary revenue. He did not think any one was justified in saying that the Board would improperly apply the proceeds of any sale of its plant.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said they were getting into an Otago free fight, and it was time that it was stopped. He agreed with the Hon. Mr. Reynolds that inquiries should be made and further evidence should be brought before the Committee as to this Bill, and especially in

regard to the disposal of the finances of the Otago Harbour Board.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK thought this question ought to be referred back to a Select Committee. They would gain information they had not had before. He thought they would find that the Bill was not at all necessary. He did not wish to say anything against the Harbour Board, but it seemed desirous of getting, and calling revenue, money that they were not properly entitled to regard as revenue.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY was quite sure that the evidence before the Committee would not improve the position one bit. In consequence of certain words in the Bill it was thought that they might be affecting the rights of certain people outside the colony. He was quite sure that those who understood the position would see differently. If the amendments were put on the Order Paper they would have an opportunity of considering them; and he would suggest to his honourable friend to withdraw the motion for a Select Committee, and that, progress having been reported, they should ask leave to sit again, until they had time to consider the effect of the Bill on the Harbour Board.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said the buildings belonged to the tenant, and, if the bondholder took possession to-morrow of the assets of the Board, he could only step in subject to the rights of the tenants, who would, of course, have the buildings. These buildings were put up under leases, and belonged to the tenant. In this particular case the difficulty arose through the tenant having made default in the payment of his rent: He quite agreed with the Hon. Mr. MacGregor that it would be more equitable to apportion the proceeds of the building, because it would deprive the Board of the rent for, perhaps, two or three years—perhaps for five or six years—through the tenant having made default. An equitable adjustment of the whole matter would be that the Auditor-General should deduct from the value of the buildings the rent the Board was entitled to for the time it had not been paid, and the surplus should go to some capital account.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND had moved the motion that the report be referred back to the Select Committee because matters had arisen during the discussion which showed the Council clearly that they had not had the position of the Board sufficiently before them in order to come to a right decision. A further inquiry appeared necessary, and he thought they would see the wisdom of such an inquiry being made before proceeding further.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE had no desire to make any difficulty about the Bill, or to obstruct it in any way. At the same time, he wished to point out that when the lease of the building fell in the building became part of the estate. It seemed to him that under the Local Bodies' Loans Act the land could be put up for rental for so many years, and that the rental they would receive would be an increased one, owing to the fact that there was a building already

upon the land. That would be sufficient to reimburse the Harbour Board for the current loss of rental.

Motion agreed to.

FENCING BILL.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said its object was to make clear certain doubtful points in the Fencing Act as it at present stood. The first amendment proposed was merely a slight alteration in the 16th section. It was thought best to re-enact the section with an alteration. The object of the alteration was to remove a doubt whether any one who purchased from the Crown, for instance, land on the boundary of freehold land should have more than one month's notice before being liable for a moiety of the cost of fencing. It had been held that, if notice did not reach the occupier within six months of the time of occupation, the responsibility ceased. Much inconvenience had been experienced in some parts of the colony by reason of the doubt on the subject, and the effect of the alteration would be that the time would be extended, and it would place the owners of property in a more satisfactory position. There was a saving clause which saved any question arising with regard to Native land. The clause in no way affected Native land, or costs under lawsuit. The object of the second alteration, in the 3rd clause of the Bill, was to set at rest doubts that had arisen as to the recovery of moneys under the Act. It seemed strange that an interpretation had been given to certain clauses of the Act that recovery could only be by summary jurisdiction, and therefore under the Justices of the Peace Act; and, where there was an agreement of a specific character between persons, it had been decided that, in case of a breach of agreement, recourse must be had to an information under the Act for the purpose of obtaining the fulfilment of the agreement. The words that had been inserted were intended to make that quite plain. Another object of the Bill was stated in the 4th section, and was to amend the law by legalising another description of fence. The fence mentioned was one which appeared to be very largely used in the North Island. Unfortunately, it was excluded from the Act at present. It was desirable that it should be incorporated in the fencing law of the colony. The only other provision was contained in the 5th clause, which was intended to define more satisfactorily the position of persons in regard to repairing fences where one proprietor left and another went in. There had been considerable doubt as to the power of recovery in such a case. He would express no opinion on that point. If the Council would read the Bill a second time he proposed to have it referred to the Agriculture and Stock Committee, as that was the Committee best constituted for considering a Bill of that character.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said that this law of fencing was a question which led to more disputes amongst neighbours and

occupiers of land than any other law on the statute-book. One matter of dispute which had arisen from time to time was whether the liability in connection with the half-cost of erecting a fence was a personal liability or whether it ran with the land. There was no doubt that some persons, where the leases were about to expire, might be placed in a peculiar position after leaving the premises. It had been found, as the Hon. Mr. Stevens had indicated, in reference to the last section of the Act, that the person who erected the fence had no redress, and could not proceed against the owner of the land, if he had not had notice. He could not proceed against the future occupier, because he was not the occupier at the time the notice was given. It had been held that the person who was in actual occupation at the time the notice was given was the only person against whom an action would lie. But further difficulty arose in connection with the Act as to the kind of fence required. If one neighbour wanted to repair it, the other man might not also agree to repair his half, and might not do anything in the matter. It would, he thought, be very much better to provide as had been provided in Queensland, where, if any dispute arose between adjoining neighbours as to whether a fence required to be repaired or not, the question was determined by the Magistrate before the work was done. Under our Act there was no means of deciding this until the work was done, when the Magistrate might find that the repairs were not really necessary; and he (Mr. Stewart) would like to see these means afforded in regard to disputes of the kind. With regard to the 2nd clause of the Bill, a person who had erected a fence might have sold his land before another person came into possession of the adjoining Crown lands. It would be much better if the person erecting the fence, or his assignee, could recover, so that the owner of the land for the time being would be entitled to step forward and say, "I have bought this land with the fence upon it." He thought the amendment proposed in the Bill—namely, a month's notice to be given—was an improvement on the present law. Regarding section 4, that was a new class of fence which it was proposed to put into the schedule of the present Act. He thought it was an unobjectionable class of fence, and one which was suitable only to the purposes required in bush districts. But this was a general Act applying all over the colony, and this class of fence would not be suitable to all parts, and people would object, perhaps, to being called upon to pay part of the cost of the erection of such a fence. Another question in practice was in regard to small grazing-runs, where an enterprising landholder wanted to put up a rabbit-fence to prevent the rabbits going through his property. It was claimed that such a fence was a boundary-fence, and any adjoining neighbour might object to its removal on the ground that it was a boundary-fence, while, at the same time, he had not contributed anything towards the cost of it. In Committee he proposed to sug-

gest an amendment to the clause whereby a person putting up a rabbit-proof fence, if his neighbour should refuse to contribute to the cost of it, should be entitled to consider it his property, and deal as he pleased with it. He should also propose that the Land Board of the district be authorised to declare the fence to be an "improvement." It seemed to him that every encouragement should be given to persons who wished to prevent the spread of rabbits, and an amendment of that provision would be a desirable one.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in reply, would merely say that he hoped his honourable friend would be good enough to place any amendments that he proposed on the Order Paper as soon as possible, in order that the Council might have the opportunity of seeing them, so that when the Bill went into Committee they would have the advantage of having them considered.

Bill read the second time.

PUBLIC DOMAINS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY had no further remarks to make on the matter.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he understood that the Speaker had ruled that the Bill was a local Bill, and that the Standing Orders had not been complied with. The question had then been, what the next proceeding should be. With a view to solving the difficulty, he had moved, "That the order of the day be discharged." The Bill as it now stood was simply two local Bills rolled into one. If they were to proceed with it at all it must be proceeded with properly and in another direction. He hoped the Council would allow the order to be discharged, so that the proper proceedings might be taken.

Bill discharged.

The Council adjourned at five minutes past four o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 15th August, 1893.

First Readings—Privilege—Personal Explanation—Gore Electric Lighting Bill—J. London—Midland Railway Company—A. J. Coghlan—Representation Bill (No. 2)—Native Affairs Committee—Goldfields Committee—Ordinance and Warlike Stores—Subsidies to Local Bodies—Cheviot Estate Disposition Bill—North of Auckland Roads—Public Works Statement—Supply—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Parliamentary Acts Printing Bill, Mining Companies Bill.

PRIVILEGE.

Mr. O'CONOR desired to call the attention of Mr. Speaker, and of the House, to a matter which involved the privileges of members. A

Hon. W. Downie Stewart

number of petitions—about a hundred—had been presented from naval and military settlers. He understood that a large number of these had been kept a considerable time by the Petitions Classification Committee, and had then been referred to the Waste Lands Committee, which had simply set them aside, and did not purpose reporting upon them or dealing with them. He wished to call attention to this, as he believed it was a gross violation of the privileges attaching to the presenting of petitions to the House. He thought that a Committee ought either to report upon the petitions as a whole, or to take them into consideration and report on each petition separately.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was clearly the duty of any Committee to which petitions were referred either to deal with the petitions by way of report, or to bring down the petitions with some information with regard to them to the House. Petitions that had been referred to a Committee were not technically in the possession of the House, and no member could make any motion with regard to them till they were reported upon. Therefore, as the honourable gentleman had said, it was clearly the duty of the Waste Lands Committee, if it were unable to deal with the petitions, to return them to the House, and to say so.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Dr. NEWMAN wished to make a personal explanation. On Friday night the Premier, reading out of *Hansard*, said that he (Dr. Newman) had voted for the disfranchisement of seamen, commercial travellers, and shearmen. That statement having been telegraphed abroad, he wished to state that the division showed that he had voted not only for the enfranchisement of those people, but of all persons who might be on the electoral roll but who might be unable personally to vote.

GORE ELECTRIC LIGHTING BILL.

Mr. RICHARDSON would point out that the objections raised to this Bill in its initial stages had, he thought, been set at rest by the Committee. The very title of the Bill had been altered, and throughout the whole Bill the Borough Council was put in the premier position; and the contracting company was put in the second position, and was subject throughout to the control of the borough. He thought it was unnecessary for him to say much more than that in explanation. That was the spirit of the alterations. Honourable members, if they looked at the Bill in its present form, would see that it had been materially altered and amended, and all in the direction which he had stated. There was now a Government Board of Control, subject to which the Borough Council was supreme, and the company was only dealt with as the Council saw fit. Power was to be granted by the House to the Borough Council, and not to the company, and a poll of ratepayers was made necessary to ratify or annul any contract which the borough made with the company. With these few remarks, he moved, That the report be adopted.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said he was unwilling to occupy the time of the House, but, as a strong believer in local government, he could not let this Bill pass without raising a note of dissent. The Bill was a great improvement on the draft which was before the House on its first appearance. Then it authorised the Gore Electric Light and Power Syndicate to break up streets, cross bridges—generally, all the powers appertaining to local government were to be given to this syndicate. Now all this had been changed, and if honourable members would take the pains to look at it they would see that the appellatives of "Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses" had taken the place of "the Syndicate." If members took the trouble to look at the Bill they would see it was a perfect object-lesson in the way alike of erasure and supplement. But, unfortunately, as far as he understood the Bill, it was merely in appearance that this had been done—it was the homage that hypocrisy often paid to virtue; and, while the Mayor, Councillors, and Burgesses of Gore appeared in the Bill, they were simply to contract with this company to do the work all the same. He was not about to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but he would like to put on record, in the first place, that it was contrary to all the principles of sound local government that any outside body, any syndicate or company seeking profit, should be empowered to supply either light or water to a Corporation. Safeguard the arrangements as they pleased, do anything they could in the way of binding a syndicate as fast as possible, it was certain that some day the ratepayers would find themselves in the wrong box, and something would arise whereby they would be bound to submit to certain disabilities, and would be unable to help themselves. Now, all this could be avoided when the constituted authorities, who had really the right to do these things, were appointed to do them, because the ratepayers had it in their power to take steps to provide a remedy. In the second place, a Corporation was just as able to start works of this kind with efficiency and economy as any outside body could possibly be. There could be no good reason in the nature of things that they should set themselves aside for any outside body whatever. In point of fact, the work ought to be done most economically by the Corporation itself, for it was not necessary for its members to look to the matter of profit in the same way as an outside body must necessarily do. Then, with reference to the 3rd clause,—that relating to the Board of Control for the purposes of this work,—he was aware that this clause occurred both in the Wellington and Christchurch Electric Lighting Acts. At the same time, he thought it right, before the Bill passed, that he should once more protest against it. Of course the Government had a perfect right to see that their telegraphic lines were not injured in any way, but there was an essential difference between the Government watching their own interests in a matter of this kind and having the initiative and the absolute control. He thought that in

passing measures of this kind they were inflicting injury on that form of local government which would be found in the long-run to be the stronghold of all popular freedom. He was not going to oppose the second reading, but he thought it was his duty to make the protest which he now made.

Sir R. STOUT said, as one who had opposed this Bill at a former stage, he just wished to say one or two words now. As the Bill had now been altered he did not think much fault could be found with it, because it gave power to the Corporation to make a bargain with a private company. The Bill as it was first introduced gave to a private company certain powers. It was true that the expression was "to make an agreement with the company"; but now the provision was entirely altered, and the Corporation had a right, and had a right to lease that right. Therefore he did not think there could be much objection to the Bill, seeing that at the end of the lease the Corporation could take over the plant, and so on, on paying the then value, without any compensation in the nature of goodwill.

Mr. McLEAN.—What part of the Bill is that?

Sir R. STOUT said he thought it was in the last clause: at any rate, it was in the Bill. That being so, this Bill was quite different from either the Wellington or the Christchurch Bill. It was far better; and therefore he did not think there could be much objection to it.

Mr. FISH might say he was as much against corporate bodies divesting themselves of the power to supply gas and water as his honourable colleague (Mr. W. Hutchison) had expressed himself, and, although the Bill was altered from what it was when originally introduced, still he did not think it made any very salient difference, for, after all, the Corporation was parting with its rights. It was all subject to an agreement which might be made with the Borough Council, and that agreement might be of an extremely favourable character to the company, or might not. However, as the last speaker had said, the Corporation had the power to resume, and it was for the borough to take care that the terms of the contract were not of a kind to seriously injure the borough when the twenty-one years had passed. There was another point in the Bill which would be observed, and it was certainly a very great safeguard. In the first place, a public meeting of ratepayers had to be held to confirm or object to the preliminary agreement; and, after the agreement had been finally considered by the local body, a poll of the burgesses had to be taken as to whether the agreement should be given effect to or not. If they answered in the negative, all things done precedent to that were null and void. He thought it was a pity the Gore Borough was not at the present time in a position to grapple with this work itself, but under the circumstances he did not think he would be justified in opposing the Bill, although he had very much objection to the principle of the borough giving away any of its rights in that direction.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the Bill seemed to have met with general approval. The only reason why it was desired that the borough should have the right of lease—the rights granted by the Bill—was that the borough was not in a financial position at present to undertake the expenditure. With regard to the other point mentioned by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison)—namely, as to the Board of Control—he did not altogether approve of that: he thought that power went rather too far; but the provisions in regard to the Board of Control had been put into the Bill to meet objections raised by the Government with regard to it. He hoped the Bill would be allowed to pass its third reading, and he thought it would be of great value in future legislation, as giving better lines on which to draft similar Bills than anything which had already passed the House.

Report agreed to, and Bill read a third time.

J. LUNDON.

Mr. J. McKENZIE laid on the table a return (pursuant to an order of the House, on the motion of Mr. Duthie) of the evidence taken in the case of *Natives v. J. London*, and a copy of the Magistrate's judgment. He moved, That the paper do lie on the table.

Hon. MEMBERS.—And be printed?

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he had no objection to the paper being referred to the Printing Committee.

Mr. DUTHIE said, as this was a matter of considerable interest to the public, he thought the paper should be printed. He would move accordingly.

A division being called for,

Mr. SEDDON said he desired to ask Mr. Speaker's ruling on a point of order. If the vote was against the paper being printed, it could not, he presumed, be printed at all, and could not even be referred to the Printing Committee.

Mr. SPEAKER said his view was that if a question was put for the printing of a document, and it was refused, it simply meant that the House did not order it to be printed. He did not think it would debar the Printing Committee from considering whether it should be printed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They have still a discretion?

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think so.

The House divided on Mr. Duthie's amendment.

AYES, 28.

Allen	Harkness	Russell
Bruce	Hutchison, G.	Saunders
Buchanan	Kapa	Taipua
Buckland	Lake	Thompson, R.
Earnshaw	McGuire	Wilson
Fish	Mitchelson	Wright.
Fisher	Moore	
Hall	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Richardson	Duthie
Hamlin	Rolleston	Newman.

NOES, 29.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Sandford
Buick	Mackintosh	Seddon
Carnecross	McGowan	Shera
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Duncan	McLean	Taylor
Fraser	Meredith	Thompson, T.
Guinness	Mills, C. H.	Willis.
Houston	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Palmer	Joyce
Kelly, J.	Parata	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Fergus	Pinkerton
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Ward
Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Mills, J.	Tanner
Swan	Dawson
Valentine.	Smith, W. C.

Majority against, 1.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

MIDLAND RAILWAY COMPANY.

Mr. SEDDON submitted the proposals of the Midland Railway Company, and moved, That the papers do lie on the table and be printed, and be referred to the Public Accounts Committee. He might say that the company had sent in that day amended proposals, which were attached to the original proposals.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. GUINNESS was going to suggest whether a simple motion that the papers be referred to the Public Accounts Committee was sufficient; whether it should not be added to in some way—namely, that the Committee examine the proposals, and report to the House. The question was, whether that was implied in the motion or not. Perhaps the honourable gentleman would state.

Mr. SEDDON said the Committee had already taken general power to call for persons and papers, and when papers were referred to the Committee it was for the purpose of reporting on them. He would, however, move, That the papers be referred to the Public Accounts Committee, and that the said Committee report thereupon.

Mr. ROLLESTON did not wish to raise a debate upon this question now, because obviously they were not in the possession of the facts at all; but he must say that his own opinion was that a large and important question like this was not a subject for the examination of a Committee. It was a question upon which the House and the country expected the Government to give an opinion as to the course which they proposed to take, and the referring of a question of this magnitude to a Committee was not a proper course to take. They expected the Government to take the responsibility of recommending a course to the House.

Mr. SEDDON said, in reply to that, all he could say was this: that it was a very strange thing that last session, when the same matter was in dispute, when the Public Ac-

counts Committee recommended the Government to enter into negotiations with the company, and the Government, in accordance with the recommendation of the Committee, had entered into such negotiations, and when those negotiations had arrived at the stage which the Government considered was the proper one for the details of these proposals, as submitted, to be again referred to the Committee, fault should be found with the Government because it desired to do what was right to the company and to the Government as well. Under these circumstances, and when it was proposed in the ordinary course to refer this large question to the Committee, to be found fault with by the leader of the Opposition for so doing was one of those things that one could not understand. He trusted the question would go to the Committee, and that the fullest inquiry would be made; and, when the proper time came for action, the Government would not shirk the proper responsibility that was cast upon them in connection with this matter.

Motion agreed to.

A. J. COGHLAN.

Mr. C. H. MILLS presented a report from the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of Arthur James Coghlan. The Committee recommended that the petitioner be paid the sum of £70 as compensation in full satisfaction of his loss. He moved, That the report be referred to the Government.

Mr. LAWRY said the Railway Commissioners were willing to pay Mr. Coghlan's claim, which they recognised as being thoroughly established by the affidavits that had been put in as evidence before the Committee. The Commissioners, however, desired to be fortified by a report from the Public Petitions Committee, and were prepared to pay the claim on a recommendation from the Committee. He (Mr. Lawry), however, desired to make assurance doubly sure, and would move, That, in the opinion of this House, the Railway Commissioners should, without delay, give effect to the recommendation of the Committee as set forth in the report.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must word his amendment somewhat differently.

Mr. LAWRY did not think any member of the House would dissent from the opinion that the Commissioners were entitled to compensate this man for his loss. He was willing to word his amendment differently.

Mr. SEDDON suggested that it be worded as a recommendation from the House that the Railway Commissioners should notify approval of this man being compensated. The amendment should be, That, in the opinion of the House, the Railway Commissioners should recommend that the petitioner be recompensed. That would be an expression of opinion on the part of the House that the Railway Commissioners should recommend accordingly.

Sir J. HALL said that, as this involved an expenditure of public money, they ought to have a reason from the Government for it.

Mr. SEDDON was satisfied that it was one of those cases in which the Railway Commissioners might recommend that this person should be recompensed. They could not put on the railway estimates anything that was not recommended by the Commissioners. That was why he suggested that the only means of testing the question was to move that the House was of opinion that the Railway Commissioners should recommend that this person should be recompensed. Then, of course, the Commissioners recommended the amount, and the House gave effect to it.

Sir J. HALL said it was rather an odd thing to tell the Commissioners what they were to recommend.

Mr. SEDDON said the House was in a position to fix the amount of compensation. They had simply to resolve that a respectful address be presented to the Governor that provision be made accordingly, but they were not in possession of the facts upon which they could recommend the amount.

Sir J. HALL thought the proper course would be by address to the Governor recommending that such an amount as the Railway Commissioners might recommend should be appropriated for the purpose.

Mr. SEDDON said that was why he suggested it.

Mr. SPEAKER was afraid the words suggested by the honourable member for Ellesmere would bring them into a difficulty. They could not resolve upon an address to His Excellency in relation to a contemplated appropriation without going into Committee. The objection to the suggestion of the honourable member rested mainly on the word "accordingly." "Accordingly" meant that the recommendation was to be consequent on the recommendation of the Committee, and therefore implied a money grant. If that word were taken out, and words were used such as would merely be an expression of opinion on the part of the House that the Railway Commissioners should make a recommendation on the subject, the proper form would be observed.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the House was not acquainted with the case that was under consideration. Some honourable member who knew the circumstances might explain them.

Mr. BUCKLAND said it was he who presented the petition to the House; and the facts of the case briefly were that the petitioner had recently got married, and all the money he had in the world had been put into his dwelling-house, when one very windy day a spark from a passing train ignited the house, the result being that it was burnt down. All the man's furniture was destroyed, and nobody denied that the Railway Commissioners' locomotive was the cause of the fire. The Commissioners themselves admitted that the man was entitled to some compensation, but they recommended him to petition the House, as they had no power to pay him. There had been several other petitions about the Railway Commissioners, and he hoped the Government would put the several amounts on the estimates.

The motion was then passed in the following amended form: "That the report be referred to the Government with an expression of opinion on the part of this House that the Railway Commissioners should make recommendation on the subject."

REPRESENTATION BILL (No. 2).

Mr. SEDDON moved for leave to introduce this Bill. The Bill was to adjust the present boundaries of the electorates in some cases where it was found that adjustment was necessary.

Sir J. HALL said, if he understood the Premier correctly, this was to be a Bill of very great importance, and altered the principle upon which the electorates were now formed under the authority of the existing law.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no alteration of principle.

Sir J. HALL said the Premier should give them a little more information about the provisions of the Bill. In a paper which supported the Government he had, indeed, found particulars of what the Bill contained. In fact, that was what had to be done nowadays: one had to look into the columns of either the Ministerial morning journal, or some other paper supporting the Government, for information as to the contents of Bills before they were communicated to the House.

Mr. SEDDON said he had himself read in the *Evening Post* statements as to the contents of Government Bills regarding questions that he had not settled himself.

Sir J. HALL said he gathered from a newspaper which supported the Government that one of the features of this Bill was to be that, when the Commissioners had determined what the boundaries of the districts should be, then their proposals were to be laid on the table of the House, and the House was to go into the matter and settle the new districts. This was a very important alteration, which went to the root of the system now established for the definition of electoral districts. Perhaps the Premier would be good enough to tell the House if that really was a feature of the Bill.

Mr. PALMER hoped there would be some alteration in the Act, because every member of the House would admit that the Commissioners who had cut up the districts could not have made more absurd and irregular ones. They had not thought of community of interests of the districts, or of the trouble there would be, not only to the candidates, but to the districts themselves. He thought the candidates were a secondary consideration. But take the District of Eden, which Mr. Mitchellson represented. For that Electorate the Commissioners had taken two ends of a district to make one whole. The City of Auckland separated the two parts of the district. They might as well take a little of Wellington and a little of the far end of Auckland and make one district of it, or a part of the North Cape and a part of Stewart Island. They had taken parts the interests of which were not similar to make one district. He did not think

that was fair. There should be community of interest. No member of the House could say that the people of any district were satisfied with the way in which the districts were settled.

Sir R. STOUT did not think it was usual to discuss the merits of a Bill on its first reading, but he rose to say that he hoped the Government would not proceed with the Bill at all. It was a great mistake to have this question discussed on the floor of the House. They knew what it meant. Those who were in the House when these representation questions were discussed must know that they led to far worse trouble than what the honourable member for Waitemata had spoken of.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was not only not usual, but not permissible, to discuss the principles of a Bill on the first reading. That, however, was not the stage to which this Bill had reached. It was only a question at present of permission being given to introduce the Bill.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable member for Ellesmere had put a question to the Premier.

Mr. SEDDON.—Why do you not let me reply to it?

Mr. BUCHANAN said he did not think they had much occasion to wait for the Premier's reply; they had that reply shining out from the honourable gentleman's face. It was quite plain that the honourable member for Ellesmere had just fallen into one of the traps so skilfully and frequently set by the Premier; and the Premier, as usual, sought to escape, and not infrequently with success too, by a side-issue from the real question which the honourable member for Ellesmere had endeavoured to put before the House, and that was, whether it was right or proper that any Government on those benches should persistently send abroad through the newspapers which supported them information—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was raising another question altogether. He could not now discuss the question whether the Government should give information to the newspapers or not.

Mr. BUCHANAN would, then, move the adjournment of the House. He did not seek to travel outside the question. He understood that the question on which he touched was discussed before he rose to address the House.

Mr. SPEAKER did not want to restrict the latitude allowable to the honourable gentleman in any way, but he would point out that the honourable member for Ellesmere asked a question of the Government as to what the Bill did contain, justifying that question by a circumstance within his knowledge: he stated that he had seen something in a newspaper purporting to be a *présis*,—and wished to know whether it was a correct one or not. That was permissible; but it did not open the door to a general discussion as to whether the Government was responsible for sending information to any particular newspaper or newspapers.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable gentleman at the head of the Government knew.

very well that they had been in the habit of giving that information all over the colony before the House had any opportunity whatever of gaining that information; and a question which arose before the House a few nights previously, when the Premier sought to postpone a number of Bills on the Order Paper in order to reach something which was lower down, illustrated what the Government were constantly doing to suit their own purposes—namely, keeping honourable gentlemen in ignorance of what was coming on until the last moment.

Captain RUSSELL said there was no pleasing some people. Even the honourable member for Ellesmere and the honourable member for Wairarapa objected to the Government giving information. They had been trying the whole of the session to get information from the Government, absolutely without being able to get it; and now they gave information—which he admitted was a little irregular—members objected to it. They ought to be thankful for getting information in any shape at all, more particularly as they never knew what was going on. The Order Paper was so jumped about that a Bill would be read a first time at half-past two, and an endeavour would be made to read it a second and a third time before three. Surely, honourable members should jump at the opportunity of getting information, even in this irregular way. With regard to this Bill, he thought the Premier ought not to be allowed to bring it down at all if the statement alluded to was correct. If it was correct, then the Bill directly violated the whole principle on which the electoral basis rested; and if it was read a second time, probably by a docile majority, the principle would be affirmed, and they would go to the elections on a system which the House had declared an improper one. He thought the House should not allow such a Bill to be introduced at all.

Mr. R. THOMPSON said, in reference to the Representation Bill, he would suggest to the Government that he thought what would meet the whole difficulty would be an alteration of the *personnel* of the Board. It would be much better if the Board of Commissioners consisted of the whole of the Chief Provincial Surveyors in the colony, and then they would have all the local knowledge which was necessary, and which they had not on the present Board. For instance, the Commissioner of Taxes was to be one of the Commissioners, and he had no local knowledge whatever. If the Board was altered so that all the Provincial Surveyors would be upon it, that would meet the whole difficulty, in his opinion.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE only wished to point out, for the benefit of the Premier, that if there was anything approaching to a waste of time on this occasion, from his own point of view he was himself entirely to blame for it. It was a most unusual thing to discuss a Bill on the question of giving leave to introduce it. Obviously it was an improper thing, because the substance of the Bill was not before them. The invariable rule was to give leave to intro-

duce Bills. The reason this discussion had arisen was probably that the Premier followed the objectionable practice of disseminating amongst his newspapers particulars of Bills coming before the House before the Bills were printed. If that had not been done on this occasion, leave would have been granted without a single word being said; and if the Premier wished to save the time of the House he would drop that practice, and let the House have the first indication of what was coming before it.

Mr. SEDDON very much regretted that any time should be occupied in this matter. He might say at once, in reply to the honourable member for Ellesmere, that, so far as the Government were concerned, he would not like himself to be held responsible for what he sometimes gave credit to smart reporters of the different newspapers, who were in the galleries, who were talking with honourable members, and whose business it was to get information and to forestall the Government, and even the Opposition. If the reporters were to be blamed for that, then he did not know why they should be blamed, because they had done their duty to their employers and earned their bread-and-butter. He hoped the day would never come when the House would find fault with reporters who had simply done their duty. He might say that in this, as in many other matters he was blamed, and blamed wrongfully. He had read, himself, in the *Evening Post*, as regarded the Government Railways Bill, a paragraph which surprised him. He had not, himself, more than committed that Bill to paper; he had not given it to the Printer or submitted it to his colleagues: yet there it was almost word for word as it would be seen in the Bill. Yet would the House accuse him of giving that information to a reporter?—because if they made him responsible for what appeared in the *Times* they must hold him equally responsible for what appeared in the *Post*. That, he thought, was a fair argument. Then, would the honourable member for Hawke's Bay believe him when he told him that a friend of his who had considerable experience said to him the other day, "If you want to watch what the Opposition is up to, read the *Hawke's Bay Herald*: that is all you have got to do"? He had read that paper. Of course, he was very much pleased to hear the honourable member for Ellesmere confess that he read the morning *Times*. That was an admission on his part.

Sir J. HALL.—Because there is no other morning paper.

Mr. SEDDON did not think the country would go into mourning for that. But, joking apart, the Government considered this a necessary Bill. Whether they passed it this session or not would depend upon the course of business. All he said was this: that, so far as the boundaries stood, the whole thing was simply a farce. What was required, and what this Bill intended to provide, was that there should be two Boards, one for the South and one for the North.

Sir J. HALL.—That is what the newspaper says.

Mr. SEDDON said that was so. It was no secret. He had said that in the lobbies. When the honourable member for Inangahua spoke this session he said he objected altogether to the House having given away its powers in respect of boundaries, and so on. In fact, he (Mr. Seddon) intended, and he thought he said so openly when the first Representative Bill was before the House, and when the honourable member for Wallace raised the larger question—he (Mr. Seddon) said he would introduce another Bill. This was the Bill that was to adjust the boundaries, and allow them to remain until the population had increased by 25 per cent. It was not contemplated to let the House fix the boundaries. With regard to laying the report of the Commissioners on the table, that was, he thought, the law at the present time, and would follow as a matter of course. He was not in the habit of giving information to the reporters. His friends opposite would admit that it was a perfect nuisance the way Ministers were asked for information—very respectfully, and he did not blame the reporters; but when a reporter came tapping at the door just at a time when a Minister wanted to be doing something, it was just as much as one could do to be civil under the circumstances,—and to be blamed when the information appeared in the paper made the thing worse. He hoped the Bill would be allowed to be introduced, and members would see for themselves that it would be a very good Bill. The Surveyor-General, the Commissioner of Lands at Auckland, and the Commissioner of Taxes would be the Board for the North Island. The Commissioner of Taxes had more information with regard to the value of properties—

An Hon. MEMBER.—That has nothing to do with it.

Sir R. STOUT.—Will the honourable gentleman say why it is proposed to deal with it this session?

Mr. SEDDON said, because of this: After every general election two years of the census time was gone. They would have this election and another in between, and this Bill was to adjust the boundaries before the next general election after the next election.

Sir R. STOUT.—Why not leave it to next Parliament?

Mr. SEDDON said that could be done, but he considered that now was the time to do it. The adjustment of the present boundaries was absolutely necessary, because they wished to keep the districts as they were until there was an increased population of 25 per cent., the same as in New South Wales.

Sir J. HALL.—Are you going to alter them for the next elections?

Mr. SEDDON said certainly not. He did not know why members should be afraid of reading the Bill and discussing it.

Leave granted, and the Bill read a first time.

NATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, the name of Mr. Cadman was added to the Native Affairs Committee.

GOLDFIELDS COMMITTEE.

On the motion of Mr. SEDDON, the name of Mr. McGowan was added to the Goldfields Committee.

ORDNANCE AND WARLIKE STORES.

On the motion of Mr. MOORE, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House giving details of the expenditure, amounting to £3,968, during last year, for ordnance and other warlike stores: the return to include the names of all persons through or from whom purchases have been made, commissions paid, invoice and landed cost of all such goods.

SUBSIDIES TO LOCAL BODIES.

On the motion of Mr. SWAN, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House of all subsidies paid under the Local Bodies' Finance and Powers Act for the last financial year to the several boroughs, counties, and Road Boards: such return to show the amount paid to each county and the several Road Boards within its limits, and the amount collected by general rates in each district for the same period.

CHEVIOT ESTATE DISPOSITION BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, before moving the second reading of this Bill I desire to make a statement in connection with a reply I gave the other day to the honourable member for Mataura. That honourable gentleman put a question to me as to whether on the second reading of this Bill the House would get an opportunity of discussing the Crown Lands Report and the general administration of the Lands Department. Now, I think it would be an inopportune time to take that discussion on the second reading of this Bill, and it is my intention to introduce a Bill in a few days amending a few technical errors which crept into the Land Act of last session, and it would be better to take the discussion on the Crown Lands Report, and on the administration of the land generally, on that Bill. I therefore hope the discussion on this Bill will be confined to the Bill itself, and will not be extended to the general administration of the lands. Honourable gentlemen have before them a map showing the manner in which it is proposed to dispose of the Cheviot Estate. I may inform honourable members that this is only a preliminary map, and may be altered a little before we sell the land: that is to say, some of the areas may be slightly increased, and others slightly decreased, when the surveyors come to make up their work finally, when they may find that there are more suitable boundaries. However, this map will show how it is proposed to dispose of the estate. In moving the second reading of the Bill, I hope the House will accept from me a short history of the estate—of the manner in which it has been acquired, the

reason which led the Government to take it over, what has been done in the matter since the estate has been taken over, and our future proposals in connection with it. These are points upon which the House will expect some information, which I shall be willing to give to the House. But, before proceeding to do so, I may say that the Bill now before the House is simply a machinery Bill for the purpose of disposing of the estate in the future. It does not make any provision for the payment for the estate: my honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer, in a few days, I hope, will bring down a measure that will deal with the question of the payment for the estate. Therefore I cannot at present go into that question. No doubt there may be considerable differences of opinion in the minds of honourable members in connection with this estate—as to its value for settlement, and whether the Government should have taken it over at all, or whether they should not. A considerable difference of opinion has existed all over the country in connection with this estate. I myself have read reports in connection with the estate in the newspapers of the colony, and, after reading them, I am quite certain that a great many of the writers of those reports and articles never saw the estate, and knew nothing of what they were writing about, and consequently were not able to give any sound opinion at all. However, Sir, the position that we are in at the present time is that we have acquired the estate, and that we must dispose of it in some manner or another before long; and the question before us is, how to do so to the best advantage. The Government was forced to take over this estate, for this reason: that it was necessary in the first instance to protect the revenue of the colony. The trustees or owners of this estate objected to the valuation put upon the estate by the Land-tax Assessors, as provided by law passed by this House. The Land-tax Department valued the estate at a certain price, but the owners of the estate said it was not worth that money, and they asked the Government to take it over at the owners' valuation, and not at the Government's valuation, as some people imagined. Had the Government not taken over the estate, it would simply have meant that they would have to make a reduction in the valuation of the estate for taxation purposes; and I may say it would not, in the opinion of the Government, have ended there. No doubt other large landowners throughout the colony would have had as good a right to say that the valuation of the Government assessors was wrong, and they would have a right to a reduction in the same manner. Therefore honourable members will see that the question of extra taxation on this one estate was not the only question at stake in this matter—that it, in fact, formed a very much larger question than the actual taxation in connection with this estate alone. Honourable members will also be well aware that there could not be a shadow of doubt that it was clearly the duty of the Government, after

the valuation they got in connection with the estate, to accede to the request of the owner, and take it over; otherwise they would be placing themselves in a very false position in connection with other large estates in the colony. The valuation of the Land-tax Department was £804,826, which amounted to about £8 11s. 5d. per acre all round. The trustees of the estate valued it at £260,220, or an average of about £8 0s. 11½d. per acre, showing a difference in valuation of £44,606, or 10s. 5½d. per acre. The owners of the estate asked that the valuation should be reduced by £44,606, but the Land-tax Department refused to make the reduction, and submitted the matter to the ordinary Reviewers, who were appointed by the law as passed by this House. The Board of Reviewers, after taking evidence on both sides in connection with the value of the estate from men well qualified to give evidence on the matter, came to the conclusion that the department was correct, and upheld the valuation of £804,826. They made some few slight unimportant alterations, but the valuation on the whole estate was virtually the same, the only alteration being in connection with improvements. The trustees then called upon the Government to take over the estate at the trustees' valuation—not at the valuation of the Government—and, as honourable members are aware, the law provides that the Government were competent to do so. If honourable members will look at the Act they will see that the trustees were perfectly within their right in asking the Government to take over the estate, and they did ask the Government to do so. The Government were then faced with this question: that they must do either the one or the other—either make the reduction or take over the estate. Before doing so they asked for a second valuation. This valuation was made by the Commissioner of Crown Lands in Canterbury and the District Surveyor in the Amuri—both men well qualified to give an opinion as to the value of the estate, and as to whether the Government were likely to get their money back. These two gentlemen went over the estate, and spent a considerable time there. They took out in a rough way the areas of what was agricultural and what was pastoral land, and their values, and they reported to the Government: their report is on the table, and honourable members can see for themselves what those gentlemen said in the matter. The valuation which these gentlemen put on the estate was £800,767, or £40,547 above what the trustees put upon the property. This showed the Government that if the report of their officers was trustworthy—as they had every reason to believe it was—the property was worth a very large sum over and above what the trustees had put upon it. However, the Government were not satisfied with this. They thought that in a case of such importance a valuation should be made by some person entirely independent of the Government and not a Government officer. We then asked Mr. McMillan, a gentleman well known in Canter-

bury, and one who formerly held a seat in this House, and who is well known to honourable members, to make a third valuation before we decided what we should do in the matter. Mr. McMillan made his valuation, and it was £295,998, or £35,790 above that of the owners. Here, then, we had three valuations—one made by the Land-tax Department, one made by competent officers of the department, and one made by Mr. McMillan, a gentleman entirely independent of the Government. The three valuations were so much larger than the amount the trustees put upon the estate that we were almost bound to take it over. In fact, the total difference between the valuations that we had made—that is, between the highest and the lowest—was £8,828, which I am sure honourable members will agree with me was not very great in an estate of such large value. After having got these three valuations, the Government could not possibly see their way to make the reduction required by the owners, and were forced into the position of taking the estate over. We arrived at that stage after very careful consideration of the whole subject in connection with land-assessment and land-tax valuation all over the colony. We considered we should not be doing our duty as Ministers of the Crown in charge of the affairs of the colony if we did not take the estate over, seeing that the valuation was so much higher than the trustees were prepared to accept for the estate. Then, another question arose which the Government had also to consider, and that was, an opportunity had been offered to the colony and to the Government of acquiring a valuable piece of land, and land very suitable for settlement purposes. We of course took that matter into consideration when deciding the question as to whether we should take the estate over or not. The estate lies along the sea-coast. The climate is equal to that of any portion of Canterbury, as far as I am aware, and the soil itself is in many parts of very excellent character. A large part of the estate is well suited for being cut up into small areas; and the very worst of it—the pastoral country—is what I should call first-class pastoral land. After the Government had decided to take over the estate at the valuation of the owners, the question arose, What should be done with it in the meantime? And I may tell honourable members that this question was also very carefully considered by the Government. We knew that if we chose to offer the Cheviot Estate for sale in one block we could make a direct profit on it, and be done with it at once.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—How much?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I believe we could have got from £40,000 to £50,000 profit. I had overtures made to me in connection with this matter by a gentleman who was prepared to go into it; and I believe, if I had been willing to follow up those overtures, I could have got the money.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who made the offer?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I cannot tell the honourable gentleman about the offer, because

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I am not in a position to give the name of the gentleman who made the offer; but I can assure the House that I had an offer, and had a long conversation with the gentleman, and he stated that there was a syndicate in Christchurch ready to take up the whole estate, and at a price which would give us a handsome profit. However, the Government, after carefully considering the matter, thought this was a good opportunity of getting settlement there—getting more people on the Cheviot Estate than there are at present; and, taking that view of it, the Government came to the conclusion that the estate should be broken up for settlement purposes, and the Lands Department was asked to take over the management of the estate at that stage. The next question I have to deal with is what we have done with the matter since the estate came into the hands of the Lands Department. No doubt most honourable members are aware that we have disposed of the estate for eleven months—on short leases of eleven months—with the right of resuming some 37,000 acres in October. The 37,000 acres is only let for six months, and the remainder for eleven months, thus giving to the colony sufficient time to survey the estate and to get it in the market for settlement. We succeeded in getting tenants to take up the estate for this short time, and, I am glad to say, at what may be considered reasonable rents, considering the short tenure we were able to give. We are at the present time receiving out of this estate interest at the rate of 3½ per cent.

An Hon. MEMBER.—On what?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—On the total purchase-money. You must remember this: that the very best of the land is only disposed of for six months; that no one who leased it could crop it, and the only use lessees can make of it is to run their stock on it for six months, and that in the winter months. I have no hesitation in saying that if we had offered a twelve-months' lease of the whole of the land we could have got full 4½ per cent. interest on our money. I have no hesitation in saying that would have been so; and I believe that this year, when we take this 37,000 acres which is to be put in the market in October, the extra amount that we shall get from that portion of the estate for the next six months will make up the difference between 3½ per cent. and 4 per cent.; and we shall have this year, I believe, 4 per cent. out of the estate, notwithstanding that the estate is in a state of transition in the way of being cut up into smaller areas and for permanent settlement. I think that ought to convince the House to a large extent that the purchase has been a good one. If, as I have said, I had been prepared at the time to give longer tenures, I have no hesitation in saying that we should have got fully 4½ per cent. on our money. That having been done, the question then arose as to the future disposal of the estate. I may explain to the House that our object in disposing of 37,000 acres for six months was to enable us to get the best agricultural land on the estate in the market in the month of October

next, so that the incoming settlers would have an opportunity of getting their houses built and fences erected, and they could even get a crop of turnips for next winter. Those who go smartly to work might be able to get horse-feed, *et cetera*. We had this in view: that it would be a good time for the settlers to get possession of the land, as, at any rate, they would be able to put in a crop of wheat for the following autumn, and the following year they would have a first return. I thought October would be a more suitable month for agricultural settlers to get on the land than April, because April is too late for anything to be got off the land that year: it is too late to prepare it for wheat for that year, and it would mean building houses and erecting fences during the winter. I thought October was the most suitable month, and that was the reason why the agricultural portion of the estate was disposed of for six months only. That having been done, the next thing was to survey and road the estate. There is a large staff of surveyors on the ground at the present time, and honourable members will see their handiwork in the map now before them. I may say that when we got possession of the estate no surveys had been done. We had to do the triangulation-work and everything connected with it. Honourable members will see that the work is well forward, and we shall have no difficulty in getting the 37,000 acres put into the market in October next. Of course, the cost of surveying and roading the estate will have to be added to the capital value. We have first to deal with the question of the Hurunui Bridge, which will cost a good sum of money to repair. Then we shall have to count the cost of surveying, the cost of roading, and the cost of repairing the slip there. The work is all proceeding, at the present time, very favourably, and we hope that before the last of the land is sold, in April next, the whole thing will be complete. When the land is disposed of to the settlers we shall be able to hand it over to the new Cheviot County, created by the Bill which was passed the other day, and the settlers will then be able to look after it themselves.

Mr. FISH.—Have you made any estimate of the cost of the work?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—We expect it to cost about £50,000—surveying, roading, repairing the Hurunui Bridge, and attending to the slip. This will bring up the cost of the estate to something over £300,000. The Bill now before the House is introduced with the object of giving us the machinery to enable us to dispose of it. And here a considerable difference of opinion may arise in the minds of honourable members, as has arisen in the minds of the people throughout the country, as to how the estate should be disposed of after it has been cut up. My opinion is, that to make settlement successful at Cheviot you require three things. You require capital, experience, and labour; and my object in dealing with the estate as I have done in this Bill is to combine the three things—that is, capital, experience, and labour. Honourable members may find

fault—as has been done in the country—with any portion of this estate being let on lease in perpetuity, or sold for cash again. I have heard it stated that the Government should sell every acre of it for cash, and put the money back into the Treasury. I have had dozens of letters and communications in connection with this matter from all parts of the country, and it seems as if every one knows better how to dispose of this estate than the Government, who have the matter in hand. I have heard it stated that there should be no land sold at all—that every acre should be let on perpetual lease.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Hear, hear.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I hear some honourable members say, "Hear, hear." Well, no doubt that is a very good theory if we had any amount of money; but, unfortunately, we have not an unlimited supply of money, and it is absolutely necessary in this matter, I think, that we should get a certain portion of the money which this estate is going to cost the colony back into the Treasury as soon as possible. We had these three points to consider: whether the land should be sold entirely for cash, whether it should be altogether disposed of by lease in perpetuity, or whether it should be disposed of by lease in small grazing-runs, or whether we should have a mixture of the three methods of disposal. My own opinion, from the very first, was that we should have a mixture—that we should give opportunity to settlers who wished to assist their sons—and I know there are a great many who are anxious to take advantage of the opportunity this estate will give them, and purchase right out farms for their sons; and there are people also who have money of their own, and who are able to purchase farms right out. And these, by using their capital, will assist to give employment to a number of working-men, for whom we have also been making provision in the shape of small allotments. I think it must be admitted that the labouring-class—who, we hope, will take up these small allotments which we are going to provide for—should be well employed; and we can only get that by having men taking up a portion of the country with sufficient capital to purchase the land right out, and also to stock it with their own money. Then, we make provision for leases in perpetuity, which will meet the needs of a number of those who have not sufficient capital to pay for the land outright, but who have experience, and good agricultural knowledge, and a little money—sufficient at all events, to pay the rental of the lease and to stock the farm. We give these people an opportunity of going there and getting farms without having to go to the money-lender to get advances to buy stock. Then, we have made provision by which one-third of the estate will be laid off for grazing-farms for twenty-one years. This one-third of the estate at the end of twenty-one years will come back to the Crown again, the Crown paying for the improvements on the farms; and I think honourable members will admit that it is only a reasonable thing to do, if you expect

to get a fair rent for these twenty-one years, to give to the tenants a valuation for their improvements. So that when the time arrives that the twenty-one years have expired, if the population in that portion of the colony has so increased as to warrant it, and this settlement is successful, the Government can, if they wish, subdivide this one-third of the estate which will fall into the hands of the Government of the day. They will be able, I say, to make still further subdivisions of the estate if they think it necessary to do so, or to dispose of them in the same way as we are proposing to do at this time. This Bill provides, as far as we can at the present time do so, the machinery for disposing of the estate, and my wish is that we should have the fullest discussion possible on this matter. I have submitted the Bill as it is now to the House, and I wish, if the House agrees to the principle contained in the Bill, and it is read a second time—for I am not now going into details in the matter—that it should be submitted to the Waste Lands Committee. If, therefore, the second reading is agreed to I shall move that the Bill be referred to the Waste Lands Committee for its consideration. Then, when the Bill has come back for the consideration of the House, there will be an opportunity of discussing the various details of the measure. At the present time I think what the House should do is to affirm the policy of the Bill—that is to say, that one-third of the property should be disposed of for cash; one-third on lease in perpetuity; and one-third as grazing-farms—which will fall into the hands of the Crown again for subdivision at the end of twenty-one years. I do not think a less time than that would be advisable—that is, if we wish to have a prosperous and successful settlement—and I am sure that would be the desire of every member of the House. The Bill as it is before the House at the present time simply contains the machinery to do this; and I have no hesitation in saying that I believe settlement would be very successful there. I believe that nothing whatsoever would be lost to the Crown in connection with the estate, and, in fact, I think the estate will be made a financial success. I would, however, warn those honourable members who are very anxious to talk about the necessity of having these large estates subdivided, that if this Cheviot Estate is not made a financial success it will simply mean that for the next twenty years we shall get no more country of that sort. On the other hand, if the Cheviot Estate is made a financial success, as I think it should be made—the Minister of Lands should make it so, with the assistance of the House—then I have no doubt we shall get other properties to dispose of in the same way when the proper time comes. However, at the present time we have got enough to do with this on our hands. No doubt the present Bill is different from any measure that has ever previously been passed through the House, because it deals with the first case of the kind we have ever had, and therefore, to a certain extent, it must be experimental. So far as

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my dealings with the matter are concerned, I have earnestly endeavoured from the first to undertake as few experiments as possible, and to insure that everything which is done in this matter shall turn out a success. I have no doubt, if the House gives me the power I ask for in this Bill, in twelve months' time I shall be able to come back to the House—if I am Minister of Lands still—and show a good result both financially and so far as settlement is concerned. I have no doubt this Bill will be criticized both unfavourably, for the reason that it proposes to dispose of a portion of the estate for cash, and favourably; but I would warn honourable members that it is impossible to provide the whole of the money necessary to purchase this estate, and to road and survey it, out of revenue, and it will be necessary, therefore, to meet the payment for the estate by disposing of a portion of it for cash.

Mr. RHODES.—Where do you propose to get the balance of the money from?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I am not going to anticipate what my honourable colleague the Colonial Treasurer will do. He will bring down his Bill, and explain his intentions to the House. I think you will find, if this Bill is carried, we shall get a considerable amount of money for one-third of the estate for the first year, and that will assist considerably to finance the other portion of it, as my honourable friend the Colonial Treasurer proposes to do. However, I wish to warn honourable gentlemen who are opposed to selling any portion of the estate for cash that they must look at the matter from a practical point of view. They must see that I am going a long way in the direction they favour by providing that two-thirds of the estate shall not be sold—that one-third of it, at the end of twenty-one years, shall come back into the hands of the Crown, for further subdivision if the Crown thinks it is necessary to take that step. I hope honourable members will see their way to allow the Bill to be read a second time; and, as I said before, we must see that the Bill before it passes is perfect in all its details. I shall be most happy to receive whatever assistance I can get from the House and from the Waste Lands Committee in putting the Bill into a good shape. I am satisfied in my own mind that the Cheviot Estate will be a success. So far as any one can be satisfied, I am satisfied in my mind as to that, and I can assure honourable members I am in earnest in what I say. I believe that, if I have the administration of the estate, in twelve months I shall be able to come back to the House and show a good result so far as finance and settlement are concerned. If I can do that, honourable members will agree that the taking of the estate will be of no detriment to the Colony of New Zealand. I beg, Sir, to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—I have listened with a great deal of pleasure to the speech made by the Minister of Lands in moving the second reading of this Bill, for he has spoken in a more

practical way as regards land-administration on this occasion than I have known him to do on other occasions when I have heard him speak on the same subject. I do not propose to speak at any great length on the measure, for, as the Minister said, the Bill is going to the Waste Lands Committee, and there, we know, the Bill will be most closely and carefully considered, and it will no doubt come back to us in an amended form, and then we shall have the opportunity of going into it. There is, however, one matter I am going to allude to, and that is with regard to the plan submitted to us. Speaking as an expert, I would say that, as a lithograph, it is a very good plan indeed; but it is not on that point I was going to speak. It appears to be somewhat misleading, and no doubt will prove to be so to a great many people, from the fact that there is a railway shown running through the property. I remember that on one occasion a survey was made of some land in Otago—in the Upper Waikaka, I think it was—and on the sale of the land over which this survey was made there was a sketch-plan on which a proposed railway was shown. Perhaps some other members of the House may recollect the trouble which arose over that. A number of petitions came to the House from people who had bought, claiming to have the value of the land reduced because the Government had not made the railway. It was the beginning of the trouble. I mention that as a reason why we should not start a second crop of troubles, by leading people to suppose that, on buying sections on the Cheviot Estate, they are going to have a railway constructed to their doors. If you look very carefully over the plan, you will see on it the words, "Proposed railway," and a very long way from these two words the word "route" put in. In two places it is so written—that is to say, "Proposed railway," and some distance off the word "route." Now, if the three words were to be together they would not have the same effect, but, as we find them now, they will lead to much misunderstanding about this proposed railway, for I do not think the Minister is at all likely to get a railway made through this estate in his lifetime. The fact is, simply stated, that the land is reserved in view of the time when a railway may be necessary. That should be done not only on the Cheviot Estate, but in the disposal of Crown lands throughout the colony; but it should be done in such a way as to give no countenance at all to the idea that in disposing of the land the Government were giving the slightest reason for the purchasers to suppose that they were going to have a railway, but only that provision was being made to reserve the necessary land in case the construction of a railway should at any time become expedient. In that event we shall have the land for the purpose without making any payment for it. Now, the Minister said that the Government was forced to take the Cheviot Estate to protect the revenue. He also said that he could have realised on the whole estate with a profit of some £50,000. Well, I take it

that if the object of the Government was to protect the revenue it was their duty to have accepted this offer, so as to recoup to the revenue the advance made from it, and they might have used the balance to buy up one or two small estates; but I fancy that, if there was a necessity for protecting the revenue on this occasion, the necessity became more than ordinarily urgent, looking to the fact that the Minister of Lands and the Government saw here an opportunity for cutting up one of these big estates with something like a reasonable chance of a revenue. Now, Sir, the reason that I object to advantage having been taken to purchase it under the Land and Income Assessment Act was that it was not so much for the protection of the revenue as, I believe, it was for the purpose of obtaining the land for settlement purposes. The Cheviot Estate is, possibly, all that the Minister has represented it to be. I have looked over it under a slight disadvantage, being, in fact, on board a steamer, a distance of six or seven miles off, but I can form a general idea of the character of country, and it looks much as it has been represented. But there it is, ranging from agricultural to pastoral land. But it was all in occupation; it was producing as much as it is likely to produce, except in the shape of people, for some time to come; and we have in this colony millions and millions of acres elsewhere producing nothing whatever. The Government are going to put people on this land, and the result of putting people there will, no doubt, be beneficial. I am sure everybody has the highest desire to see the country peopled, and not to see sheep only upon it. Still, for the same money the Government could have bought a million acres of Native land in the North Island now absolutely unproductive. And it is, to my mind, the first duty of a Government to deal with the unproductive areas in the colony; and when they have dealt with those—the unoccupied Crown and Native lands—they then can turn their eyes to such estates as this. I think the position in which the Minister finds himself to-day must be a very awkward one, after the speech he made not so long ago on the Land Bill, in which he affirmed that he would leave those benches if he did not get his ideas carried, one of which was not to part with an acre of freehold land. I think his proposals in this direction are as Liberal as we can expect from him under the circumstances; but I think, if the estate was purchased to protect the Government finance, he should have gone further, seeing there was by his account so large a margin of profit which the Government say there is on the estate. Why did he not realise on the estate until he had recouped the revenue its total outlay, and then nationalise the balance? That would have carried out the principle of protecting the revenue on the one hand, and the principle of the Minister on the other of not selling any of the public estate. He might have had a large profit left, and have used that profit in the acquisition of private estates. But to come back to the main objection I have to

the purchase of this estate, it was in occupation, and productive, and, to my thinking, the first efforts of any Government should be to deal with unoccupied and unproductive areas. I do not think I shall take up any further time now, but I will deal with the machinery part of the Bill when the Bill is reported from the Waste Lands Committee.

Sir R. STOUT.—I think the Minister has made out a good case for the purchase of this estate, for, if the estate had not been purchased after the valuations had been received, then the clauses in the Land and Income Assessment Act relating to valuation would practically be entirely inoperative and useless. And I think nothing has been said or could be said against the purchase of this estate by the Government. The only point which I ask the Minister and the Waste Lands Committee to consider is this: that in the disposal of the estate they should not do what is practically being done by the Bill—get rid of not one-third but two-thirds on freehold tenure; because the lease in perpetuity, or the eternal lease of nine hundred and ninety-nine years, is practically a freehold. I would therefore suggest, if the exigency of the colony's finance is such that some of the land must be sold, let one-third be sold, let one-third be perpetual lease under the old system, and let the other third be let on lease for grazing farms. This will be a fair compromise. I do not wish to interfere with the Government's finance at all: on the contrary, I believe it will strengthen their finance, because under the old system it is provided that at the end of thirty years there shall be a re-adjustment of rent. This suggestion will not, I think, endanger the finance of the colony, but it is likely, I believe, to be a benefit to the colony. This lease in perpetuity, I again repeat, is a perfect sham altogether. I think, therefore, here is an opportunity of trying the lease on the perpetual system without the right of purchase, and I believe the land will sell at as high a price on the one system of leasing as on the other. I do not say that, if the finances of the Government would not thereby be interfered with, I should not have liked to see none of the land sold. I believe that to sell an acre of the public land is wrong. But I know I am in a minority on that point. But, seeing that a third of this estate is to be disposed of on lease, I ask the Minister and I ask the Waste Lands Committee to make it a real lease, and not a sham one, which this lease in perpetuity is. I make this suggestion, and I hope the Waste Lands Committee will accept it. If they do not, even though I stand alone, I shall move in this direction when the Bill is in Committee of the House.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Sir, I shall not take up much time at the present stage of the Bill, as further opportunity will be given when the Bill comes back from the Waste Lands Committee. The honourable gentleman, in his opening remarks, truly said that there were differences of opinion as to the policy of the Government in acquiring this estate. I should like to have a good deal more information before finally

deciding; but, if I understood the honourable gentleman aright, he said that the result of the sale and leasing of the estate would certainly be successful from a financial point of view, and would absolutely justify the Government in all the steps they had taken. Well, Sir, that may or may not be the case. I would only ask the honourable gentleman to recollect this: that—more especially in the South Island—in days gone past a great many estates were cut up by their owners, and sold or leased, as the case might be, with results in many cases very disastrous, both to the owners who had cut up the estates, and more especially to those who had purchased them. The honourable gentleman knows just as well as I do that many of the owners, who thought they had disposed of their estates to very great advantage, were absolutely forced to take them back at a great loss to themselves.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—The price was too high.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable gentleman says the price was too high. In some of the cases I dare say that was so; but what may happen in the case of the Cheviot Estate, and what is happening in the case of thousands of acres now being sold in the North Island, is that not only is land being taken up at too high a price, but with insufficient capital to work it, and the result is its abandonment or transfer to others, with great loss to the occupiers, or the Government being recommended to reduce the rent under the Lands Revaluation Act which is upon the statute-book. We may have all these things happening in the case of this Cheviot Estate; and where then will be the profit on the transaction? But I should like to make a few remarks upon the valuation of the land. Every honourable member who has the pleasure of knowing Mr. McMillan must feel that in his indorsement the Government were largely justified in relying upon the two previous valuations made by the Assessor under the Land and Income Assessment Act, and later on by the Crown Lands Commissioner and Chief Surveyor of the district. Mr. McMillan is well known to be possessed of large experience, especially in the part of New Zealand where he lives, and, to some extent, outside of that district. But a great many instances have come within my knowledge where men well qualified to value land in their own immediate neighbourhood have found themselves completely mistaken when called upon to value land in districts new to them. I hope this will not prove to be the case in this instance, and that, the Government having got possession of the land, all their anticipations will come to be fulfilled. But I would say this, without any hesitation: that if the honourable gentleman anticipates any great area of land being put under cultivation successfully for wheat and other grain he is very much mistaken indeed. I am asked whether, like the previous speaker, I have seen this estate through binoculars. Well, I have seen it through binoculars, and I have seen it also by travelling over part of it personally: not that I would

state to the House that I have seen enough of it to judge of its value as a whole; but I am free to say that I was very much pleased indeed with the portion I did see. But, as to any such area as stated by the Minister being agricultural, I must dissent from that entirely. I am satisfied that his estimate in this respect is altogether wrong.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I think the estimate is under.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I cannot, also, help thinking that, if the Government had made due allowance for the £3,000 of land-tax which they have been receiving from the estate, the purchase-money could have been laid out to much greater advantage in purchasing Native land which is now entirely unoccupied.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I do not intend to keep the House long. But I am surprised at the honourable member for Mataura and the honourable member for Wairarapa always taking up this question, "Why do you not purchase Native land?" If the Government were to purchase all the Native lands they can, that would not interfere with this matter; this is a matter outside of Native-land purchase altogether; it has no connection with the year's transactions in connection with the purchase of Native land. If the House grants the money, let them purchase all the Native land they can get their hands on, and the sooner they do it the better. This is not a matter connected in any way with the purchase of Native lands. It is those who do not want this thing to be touched who hang upon this as an excuse that the money ought to be put in another direction. But the money would not be spent in another direction, and we all know that. This money would never have been put in land at all had this not been done with it. I do not intend to speak at length on this question, because I happen to be a member of the Waste Lands Committee, and the matter will come up before us in due time, and we can discuss it more profitably there than here. But it is misleading to put this transaction as against Native-land purchases, because such purchases have nothing whatever to do with the matter.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—Sir, I would not say a word at this stage but for the remarks of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. He speaks positively about questions he does not appear to know much about: and he certainly does not know much about the purchase of Native lands. I say that not only could this money have been better spent in purchasing Native land, but a large area of Crown lands in the North Island is now lying idle and cannot be used, and if the Government borrowed money on debentures and opened up this Crown land instead of purchasing the Cheviot Estate they would have done much more good for the colony. If the amount of money that is now proposed to be spent over this Cheviot Estate had been spent on roading and opening up Crown lands in the North, it would have been much better for the colony. I do not wish to say a word to depreciate this estate; it is now bought, and we must make

the best of it; but I think the money could have been much better spent, and, if the Government had shown the same attention and energy in regard to Crown lands in the North that they have displayed in regard to this Cheviot Estate, it would have been much better for the country.

Mr. DUNCAN.—You do not know much about it.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—The honourable gentleman says I do not know much about it. That is his opinion. I think this purchase has been a very good thing for Canterbury, and no doubt it is very popular in the district the honourable gentleman comes from; but that does not represent New Zealand.

Mr. DUNCAN.—I am not a Canterbury man.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—Canterbury does not represent New Zealand. I certainly think, although the purchase may have been a necessity, as I admit, in protection of the revenue—I do not question that point at all—at the same time it would have been much better if the same amount of money could have been found for opening and roading our Crown lands in the North Island. Now the estate has been purchased, let us make the best we can of it; but I cannot allow this occasion to pass without placing my opinion on record that it would have been much better in the interests of the colony generally if the same amount had been spent in opening and roading the Crown lands in the North.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, the last speaker seems to me to take a very selfish view of this important question; and I should like to ask him, how many hundreds of thousands of pounds out of the Consolidated Fund and the taxpayers' pockets down our way have been used for the purchase of Native lands? Hundreds of thousands. This is not a question of North or South at all. What I object to is the honourable gentleman dragging in this question of Native lands against this particular thing. I should be prepared at all times to assist the Government in obtaining Native lands for settlement. I congratulate the Government on their purchase of this property. They have no right, after acquiring this property, to sell the freehold of one acre of it. The honourable member for Inangahua said that the present lease in perpetuity was a mistake. Now, Sir, when this question was dealt with five or six years ago, when Sir George Grey was in his place in this House, what did he say about thirty years' leases and revaluation? That is what they called a perpetual lease then—it was a lease for thirty years with the right of revaluing; and Sir George Grey said then, and I have no doubt if he were here he would say now, that you are making serfs of the settlers in the meantime; and, if you want to get the unearned increment, you must tax the unimproved value of the land. You can thus get the unearned increment without dealing with the rent at all. That is a fair way of dealing with the question. You fix the rent for ninety-nine years if you like. If the necessities of the

State compel you to raise revenue, then tax the land, without interfering with the rent at all. I was exceedingly sorry to hear the remarks made by the honourable member for Wairarapa. He seems to infer that no one can go on land unless he is a millionaire—a capitalist. I know hundreds of men who have gone on forty, fifty, or sixty acres of land with their wives and families and a few cows, which do not count for much, and they have made an independence for themselves and for those coming after them. In dealing with a question of this kind I want those who are placed on this land to have the same chance as those in the past. At any rate, there will be a very sad disappointment in our part of the country if the land is going to be dealt with in the manner indicated by the Minister. How much is he going to get in cash for the 5,000 acres and mansion? I do not think he expects to get £50,000 for that block. Possibly he may contemplate getting £30,000. Supposing he sells another portion, and realises altogether £75,000 or £80,000 in cash, now, surely the State is not in that impecunious condition that £80,000 makes much difference one way or the other. To my mind, we have thousands of pounds in the Public Trust and in the Insurance which might well be put into a property of this kind as an investment, because I feel quite satisfied that when this land is settled, as it will be, those settled on the land can pay their rent—5 per cent.—with the greatest ease imaginable. It is not a borrowing scheme—it is simply an investment. I believe, myself, that anybody with a large sum of money would advance it to-morrow upon the guarantee of the settlement that will take place under the Act. I am not desirous of taking up time in discussing this question now, and I have only to say that I enter my protest against this proposed sale of the fee-simple. I understood the Minister to say that any one voting for the second reading pledges himself to the proposal to sell one-third for cash, one-third on leases for twenty-one years, and one-third under the other portion of the Bill. In voting for the second reading of the Bill, I do not do anything of the kind, because I trust that when the Bill comes before the Waste Lands Committee they will knock it into such a suitable and proper shape that I shall have the greatest pleasure in supporting it; but, if it comes back in the same form as it is now in, I am very much afraid that, in the interests of the people who sent me here, it is very possible I shall have to vote against it.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Sir, I do not propose to make any lengthened criticism of this Bill now, because it will go to the Waste Lands Committee, and then is the time to criticize the details. I believe it is said to be the business of the Opposition to oppose, but I do not look at this Bill in any spirit of carping criticism at all. My feeling in regard to this Bill and this estate is that, I think, expressed by Bishop Selwyn in the early days. It was a favourite phrase of his: "In we are, and on we must." We have gone in for this Cheviot Estate, and it is our duty to make the best of it. It is the duty

Mr. Taylor

of this side to point out any particulars where we think the Government have gone beyond what was the intention of Parliament, and generally to state what the dangers in respect of these proposals are, and at the same time do our best to assist the Bill to a good conclusion. Sir, first of all I may say I do not think that when Parliament passed that provision for the protection of the revenue it had any idea that the use would be made of it that has been made of it for the purchase of this estate. The fact that was before Parliament was this: that it made provision for the purchase out of revenue of any estate that did not comply with the Act—any estate which they felt forced to purchase; and I think the mind of Parliament was that that restriction that the funds should be provided for out of revenue would guide the extent to which that power should be used. I do not think that was intended as a means of buying large estates for settlement purposes. However, the Government have taken a very large responsibility upon themselves in the course they have taken. They have determined to mix up the provisions of two enactments. Under the Land for Settlements Act the Government should have certain powers for taking land for settlement. So far as Parliament laid down by legislation, it was not the intention of Parliament that they should take lands for the protection of revenue without recouping that revenue, especially as it was stated in the Act the land should be paid for out of revenue—that is, out of taxation. That seems to me to be an initial difficulty that the Government have determined to override, and I believe they are going to have the support, at the present time at any rate, of a very considerable majority of the country. The real question with regard to this Act is, whether they have acted wisely or not, and that cannot be determined at the present time. They have taken upon themselves a great responsibility, and time will show how far they were right in taking it. There is another point which it seems to me the Minister rather overstated. He stated that he was forced to take this land over. I should like to ask him in how many cases—scores of cases—they have not taken the land over where the owners have undervalued it. There are any number of cases we are all acquainted with in which the Government has not taken the land; and if the Government came and said that this estate offered special inducements and had special advantages for purposes of settlement there would be some reason in what the Minister says for their taking this estate; but I scarcely think it does present those inducements. I think the estate is practically in the nature of an island. It is separated by a very great distance from any land carriage by the railway, and its means of communication for a long time to come, except for very light traffic and for stock, will be by sea. That seems to me to be one difficulty that will meet the Government and settlers on that land from the beginning. Then, Sir, there was this, also, which I think the Government have not

given sufficient consideration to in their determination to take the land: First of all, this property was bringing in a very considerable amount under the taxation of the country—about £3,000 a year. And when you come to take the fact of the £300,000 which will be spent, taking that at 4 per cent. or thereabouts, the Government will be paying interest to the extent of more than £10,000 a year besides. Well, that, of course, is a point that, I think, if I had to deal with the thing, would have weighed very largely with me; and I think there are a number of estates that, so far as I can gather from the returns laid on the table, might have been taken with greater advantage. There are properties lying alongside existing railways, for instance, upon which people might have been settled, and at very much less cost. In fact, the Government might have given considerably more per acre for land lying alongside a railway, and the State would have profited more by the purchase of that land. Down South there are large tracts of country where settlement would be a considerable advantage, and where good offers, we are informed, have been made to the Government of land for sale. There is one point I wish to speak about. The Bill seems to me to be one which will give scope for what I have spoken of before—that is, paternalism. This estate is going to be, I was going to say, a kind of Eden for the Minister to luxuriate in, and upon which he will place a population which will not be subject to the ordinary laws in regard to land. First of all, though this is declared to be Crown lands, and though elsewhere the purchasers and the holders of Crown lands have a direct interest in the purchase-money—that is to say, they obtain a certain proportion out of the proceeds of the land—that is not to be the case here. And I think the people would have been far better off if, instead of the eternal lease—in respect of which I agree with the honourable member for Inangahua—there had been an even smaller proportion of the perpetual lease, a portion of the proceeds of which would have gone to a system of local government: that is, the people there would have a revenue coming in for local purposes, which would have put them in a more independent position. I hope, Sir, that will be altered, and that we shall have, instead of an eternal lease, which is another form of freehold, a certain portion of the perpetual lease. I do not wish to detain the House with further criticisms. The Bill will, of course, be closely criticized in the Waste Lands Committee, and I shall do my best, so far as I can, to help the Minister of Lands to make a success of the undertaking, which, I must confess, I think he was a bold man to go into, and in respect of which he has taken a responsibility which the House never intended him to have.

Mr. WRIGHT.—In view of the three valuations which the Minister of Lands obtained in respect of this block, I am not disposed to cavil at his action in having taken the steps he did to ascertain its value; but, nevertheless, I feel that the estate is very much in

the nature of a white elephant. If my information is correct, what is called good agricultural land in this block is not of a character fitted to grow wheat. As an instance of that, I am credibly informed that men who were cropping on this property during the past season had 1,500 acres in wheat, and that they only averaged six bushels to the acre, and were ruined in the process. That does not seem to promise very well for the future of the estate.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I am not astonished at that with regard to some men.

Mr. WRIGHT.—I presume the men who took the property knew something about the process, and that it was the fault of the land, and not the fault of the croppers. Then, the Minister told us that he expected to realise something like $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the purchase-money, but he does not tell us what he expects to realise on the gross expenditure on the estate. He has told us that it would cost at least £50,000 for surveys, roads, bridges, and other works; and, that being so, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the purchase-money would only be equivalent to $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. when this £50,000 is added. But these are matters for future consideration. My principal object in rising was to appeal to the Minister not to allow this property to be submitted to auction with a sale-plan showing projected railways. It is all very well to have made a survey for a possible line of railway, and to have set aside the land for the purpose, but there should be no indication on the plans which are to be submitted at auction-time that a railway is contemplated by the Government. That is only calculated to mislead purchasers, and I presume the Government in this case do not desire to realise fictitious values on the faith of a railway-line shown on the plan, and which they do not intend to construct. That process has been adopted in the past by private individuals when cutting up their estates, and the unfortunate purchasers have thereby been very much led astray. I should like to ask the Minister, as he has taken the trouble to show the railway surveyed between the Hurunui and the Waiau, whether he has also surveyed the connecting link between the Hurunui and the Waikari. I understand that is a wide stretch of country, and rather difficult for railway purposes. However, he can give us that information when he replies, and, whether that connecting section of many miles is surveyed or not, I strongly urge upon him the expediency of striking out of the sale-plans of this property any reference whatever to a Government railway; so that the purchasers may not be misled, and have an excuse to come at some future time upon the colony in respect of their purchases.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Sir, I should like to draw the attention of the Minister to two or three points in this Bill: not that I object as a whole to the Cheviot purchase; it is more in regard to the finance proposed by the Minister. I should like to draw his attention to clause 21, which, I think, is the most extraordinary clause in regard to finance that has been drafted by

any Minister for a very long time. It is a short clause, but, still, it is one which I think the House will refuse to pass. It says, "The Colonial Treasurer may, without further appropriation, pay out of moneys at credit of the said separate account all such sums as shall be payable under this Act," and so on. That means that the Minister for the time being, whoever he may be, has absolute control of all moneys that may come in, whether from rents or from sales. And, furthermore, there is nothing in this clause to show that the Minister is every year to lay before this House a return showing how those moneys have been expended. There is absolutely no other control than that of the Minister—not even to the extent of an audit. The whole thing is left to the sweet will and discretion of the Minister. That seems to be the condition of affairs. I hope, Sir, if this Bill comes before the Waste Lands Committee, that they will amend that clause so that there may be some regular arrangement under which this House shall know how such large sums of money have been expended. I should like to draw the attention of the House to this fact,—for we must call this a Land for Settlements Act: that in other parts of the world where land has been taken for settlement they have almost invariably provided for a sinking fund as a means of repaying such moneys: here, however, the Minister is taking power to raise £260,000, and to add that to the debt of the colony without making any provision whatever for the repayment of a single shilling.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—This Bill does not provide that at all.

Dr. NEWMAN.—The Bill provides for a good deal. I should like to point out, Sir, what has been done in other parts of the world where this process of buying land for settlement has gone on, instead of doing as the Minister proposes in this Bill, after borrowing £260,000—namely, to sell a lot of that land, and spend the whole of the money,—and then this country is to be saddled with the debt, and no provision whatever is made for repaying it. Take, for instance, the Stein law in Germany, where a large proportion of the lands—nearly half of the country—belonged to the nobles. They were—like Cheviot Estates—cut up and sold to the people. The nobles there got a mortgage debenture guaranteed by the State, being paid in debentures or consols—equal to eighteen years' rental of the lands so taken. The tenants to whom the land was disposed of paid at the rate of 5 per cent. for forty-seven years: then the land became their own. Thus they were able to make a sinking fund, which at the end of forty-seven years repaid the whole of the debt. By this means the nation became a nation of small landowners without adding to the national debt. We are now purchasing the Cheviot Estate, and we are talking about buying the Glenmark and other estates, and thereby adding to our debt for ever. Sir, it is a very serious condition of affairs. I would point out to the Minister that in Prussia, in 1859, the nobles

held 37,000,000 acres of land, and, by means of debentures such as the Minister proposes here, in the next ten years no less than 16,000,000 acres—nearly half of their country—was broken up into small farms for the peasantry. There they always had a small sinking fund for the relief of the permanent debt of the nation. In Russia the same thing happened. There the Government bought from the nobles 40,954 estates—equal to 85,000,000 acres of land—which they distributed to the people. Those serfs, who were afterwards free, thus became a sort of small yeomanry. In this case also they had a sinking fund, which lasted forty-nine years. The Russian nation took care that the whole of the money for the purchase of this land should be repaid. I think the Minister will find, if he looks up Lord Brabourne's, and Lord Ashbourne's, and Mr. Balfour's Acts for the purchase of land in Ireland out of the large estates there—he will find that provision was made for a sinking fund. And I think, Sir, that the Minister should make some provision for a sinking fund in this case, even if it only provides for repayment during the best part of a century. I think this Cheviot purchase will be followed in after years by others, and I will ask this House to pause in the beginning and insist that repayment should be made. This system of purchasing portions of estates will have to go on all over the world. In England Parish Councils are established, with power to buy land for settlement. In Switzerland there has been an effort made to retain the lands among the people, and the efforts they have made have been so far satisfactory. I do regret that the Minister should have brought down a Bill of this kind with such an offensive clause as this clause 21 in it, in which there is no provision for repayment. I think every detail in connection with this purchase should be known to the whole public from time to time, and the information laid on the table of the House. If this is done I can see very little objection to the great bulk of this Bill.

Mr. MEREDITH.—Sir, the honourable gentleman who has just down has evidently studied the land question in its operations in various countries, and has given the House some valuable information. The honourable member for Ashburton stated that he had been credibly informed by persons now cropping on Cheviot that the men who would be put on the land would not get more than six bushels to the acre. Sir, the honourable gentleman is a practical farmer, and he must know that the excessive rain which fell last winter and spring militated against the yield of crops all over the South Island. Land which formerly yielded as much as sixty bushels to the acre, last year yielded only twenty bushels. That was the case all through Canterbury, and, I might say, throughout the whole of the South Island. That shows that the honourable member has not been credibly informed as to the value of this estate. The honourable member for Halswell asked, Why did not the Government take other estates that had been offered to them both in the North and South Islands.

Dr. Newman

I would remind the honourable gentleman that a paper laid on the table of the House, at the instance of the honourable member for Ellesmere, shows that under the Land for Settlements Act blocks of land to the extent of 150,000 acres had been offered, but not one of those blocks has been selected by the Government as suitable for settlement. That shows that the Government are to be commended for the discrimination they are showing in reference to the acquisition of land for settlement. The honourable member for Mataura said that the Cheviot Estate was in occupation, and productive, at present. That is quite true—I have heard that again and again urged in this House; but the honourable gentleman, and the party with which he has been associated in the administration of the affairs of this country, are of the opinion that large estates should continue, comparatively unproductive, in the hands of a few persons. Sir, the action of the Government in acquiring the Cheviot Estate for settlement has my unqualified approval. I think most of the members of this House will give the same to the Government. I admit at once that it is a departure from the ordinary and recognised course for the Government to purchase such a large estate. The land policy of the late Government was in the direction of persons aggregating large estates from Crown lands; while the land policy of the present Government is in the direction of the disintegration of large estates, and is in accord with the modern conception that large blocks of land should be subdivided, and people settled on them. The honourable member for the Hutt, when speaking, reminded me of what has taken place in the Old Country, which will be in the recollection of members of this House. I refer to Ireland and the West of Scotland, where tenants whose ancestors for generations were in possession of small holdings have been evicted—men, women, and children turned out on the roads, with a view of making these small holdings into parks and pleasure-grounds, so that game may roam there for the entertainment of the rich. I hope such will never be the case in New Zealand. I hope we shall never require an Oliver Goldsmith to depict the condition of the country thus:—

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.
Princes and lords may flourish or may fade;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed can never be supplied.

A time there was, ere England's griefs began,
When every rood of ground maintained its man.

Sir, the Government have acquired this estate in an honourable manner. Everything in connection with the purchase of this Cheviot Estate has throughout been conducted in an honourable manner, and credit is due to the Minister of Lands and his colleagues for the way in which it has been carried on. The trustees for this estate asked a certain figure for the property. The Government appointed gentlemen who knew the estate, to examine and

value it. Then the Government came to the conclusion that it was in the interests of settlement of the country that Cheviot should be purchased. Coming to the estate itself, I say that it would rejoice the hearts of those ancient historical characters Joshua and Caleb, who were sent by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan, and reported that it was a land flowing with milk and honey, as descriptive of its fertile soil, abundance of water, and healthy climate. If we were to apply these terms as descriptive of the Cheviot Estate they would not be much higher than it deserves. I regret to say honourable gentlemen who have no more acquaintance with the Cheviot Estate than such as they could get by merely passing along the coast in a steamer, or taking the steamer at Lyttelton for Wellington, have on the floor of this House during the financial debate applied the following terms to the purchase of this land: "good thing for the trustees;" "a loss of £3,000 revenue;" "no advantage to the colony;" "will not advance settlement;" "adjacent lands much better for settlement;" "a white elephant." I venture to say, Sir, that if the honourable gentlemen who employed those terms had only an opportunity of going down in the "Hinemoa" and spending a few days on the estate they would have felt very anxious to withdraw those terms, as absolutely meaningless when applied to Cheviot. I know the estate, and I consider it one of the finest estates in the South Island. As to the land in the neighbourhood of it being equal to it, I do not think it is possible to find an estate of equal area of such quality, and so suitable for settlement, as the Cheviot Estate. I do not wish to occupy the time of the House, but I should like to read from a letter I have in my possession from a gentleman who has lived in the neighbourhood of this estate for a number of years—a gentleman who employs a large number of men, and keeps some fifteen or twenty teams at work. This is what he said in a communication to me giving an account of this estate:—

"In reference to the purchase of Cheviot by Government, let me say that I consider it a very good bargain indeed for the country. Its soil and climate are unsurpassed in the South Island, or, perhaps, in any other island or country. I do not know of any money invested by Government for years in any other undertaking that will yield such sure, quick, and permanent return. Were the Government to offer Cheviot for sale by public auction, without doubt a handsome return for the money would be forthcoming. . . . In regard to facilities for getting material or produce to or from the place, there is a nice bay sheltered from all except north-east winds, which are not the prevailing ones. Vessels can lie at anchor, and work in almost any weather with perfect safety, there being excellent anchorage, and the run to Lyttelton occupies only a few hours. There is a most efficient shipping plant, consisting of a commodious store, slip, an iron 12-ton boat, a powerful steam-engine, and all the other necessities for such work. . . .

As an incident, I may mention that a successful Victorian farmer visited Cheviot, and stopped with me for a week. I drove him all over the place, and his verdict is that it is the finest block of country that he has come across, although he has visited most of the countries in Europe. The same gentleman means to get a slice of Cheviot for himself, and leave Victoria. In brief, I do not know of a block of country of the same size between Invercargill and Cook Strait that can approach it by way of comparison. That it can grow grain, root-crops, and grasses I have put to the test, and that it can grow all of them to perfection."

Sir, that letter speaks for itself; and that is one of the gentlemen to whom the honourable member for Ashburton refers as his authority.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who is it?

Mr. MEREDITH.—It has been said on the floor of this House that when the Cheviot Estate is cut up and offered for sale there is not likely to be much demand for it. Facts are entirely contrary to that statement. In the last annual report of the Land and Survey Department laid on the table of the House, Mr. Marchant, Commissioner of Crown Lands, states, "The opening of Cheviot lands for selection is eagerly looked forward to by a large number of persons who are desirous of acquiring land for actual occupation." In addition to that, I may point out what took place when Crown lands were offered for sale recently in Christchurch. The honourable member for Ellesmere knows the block, which is one of 5,586 acres, on the margin of Lake Ellesmere, only suitable for grazing purposes, part of it being covered with water during the winter. It was divided into forty-seven sections, varying from 150 to 160 acres each. There were seven hundred applications for the forty-seven sections, and one hundred and twenty persons were present in the room when the ballot took place. The *Christchurch Press*, in giving a description of what took place, states, "That there is a very large demand for land in Canterbury is evidenced by the attendance at the Canterbury Land Board. A noticeable feature of the gathering was the number of young men present." I have very little further to add in regard to this estate. There is a doubt in the minds of some members as to the existence of a supply of water on the estate. When the estate was worked as a whole there was no difficulty in regard to the water-supply; but when the land is subdivided and settled upon there may be a difficulty, but I think that difficulty can be easily removed. Water can be obtained on the flat at a depth of not more than 20ft., and, as the flat is surrounded by high country on all sides, I am not sure but that water might be obtained by means of artesian pipes. I would suggest to the Minister that before an acre of land is sold pipes should be sunk, with a view of ascertaining whether water can be obtained by that means. I believe the value of the land might thus be considerably enhanced—I mean of that portion of the estate intended to be offered for cash. Then, the estate is bounded on the south

by the Hurunui, and on the north by the Waiau, both large rivers; and I think it is quite possible to have a supply of water from the Waiau—that river might be tapped somewhere about the mouth of the Leamington. At any rate, I do not think there should be any difficulty whatever on the question of water-supply. In reference to timber, there is a scarcity. There is no timber on the estate suitable for building purposes. It is true there are about 120 acres of plantation of thirty years' growth. And there are about 422 acres of stunted timber, suitable for firewood and fencing purposes. But I might point out that there is an abundance of timber at Kaikoura, and also at the Sounds, which I believe could be landed as cheaply at Port Robinson as at Lyttelton. I think it is quite true that the Government were offered a premium on their bargain; but as the estate was purchased in the interests of the people, and with a view of settlement, I think the Government acted entirely in the interests of the country by letting the settlers who want to go on the land have the benefit. If the Government have obtained a bargain, I say, let the people of the colony have the benefit of it. In section 11 of the Bill it appears that provision is made that no person who has freehold or leasehold land shall be allowed to take up a portion of this estate. I should like to see this strictly carried out. If the estate is to be settled in the interests of the landless in the colony who may have money and experience, and are anxious to purchase or rent a portion of the land, by all means let that class of our fellow-colonists have a chance of settling on the estate. I hope that those who think the Government should not sell the land, but should let it under perpetual lease, will bear in mind the three forms of tenure in the Land Act of 1892. I think it would be improper for the Government to depart from the conditions of tenure laid down in that Act. Then, with regard to the townships proposed to be laid off on the Cheviot, I trust the Minister will be careful not to offer for sale a section in the proposed townships until such time as the rural land is disposed of. I mention this because some few years ago Mr. Moore, of Glenmark, offered for sale sections in the Township of Waikari, and he sold in that township something like fifteen thousand pounds' worth of land. Persons bought the land with the expectation that the rural land around the settlement would also be disposed of, and that the settlement in time would be a flourishing one; but Mr. Moore altered his mind and did not sell many sections of the rural land, and sections can now be obtained in the township at very little more than was paid for them twelve or fourteen years ago. If my suggestion is carried out business people will know what they are about. I notice by the map that there is to be a central township of about two hundred and fifty acres; and if that is divided into quarter-acre sections it would probably bring in a sum of £20,000, and such a sum would go a long way towards roading the estate. The purchase of this estate is one of

Mr. Meredith

the most important undertakings of this or any other Government. I wish the Government every success, and I believe the majority of members of this House will be only too glad to render every assistance to the Government in administering the estate in the interests of settlement.

Mr. LAKE.—I do not think I need refer at great length to the remarks of the honourable gentleman who has just sat down. He always acts the part of chorus to the Government, and is always prepared to dance to the Ministerial piping. But I think I may safely say that we may gauge the value of his statements on this Bill by the accuracy of the curious illustrations by which he has chosen to illustrate his subject. He assures us that if Joshua and Caleb—who he tells us were the two spies sent out to view the promised land—had been resurrectionised and had come to Cheviot they would have pronounced the land to be flowing with milk and honey. His statement was unreliable in the first place if he referred to the twelve spies, because his judgment was probably biased by the sad fate of the ten whose report was of the wrong colour, and inaccurate in the second place both as to names and result, if, as is probable, he referred to the two spies mentioned in the Book of Joshua. I will only say, for the sake of the position the honourable gentleman takes up as the good young man of his party, I hope that when he went to spy out the land he did not too closely follow the example of those two spies, and that, if he did, no evil consequences followed from his nocturnal sojourn in such questionable quarters. The honourable member for Sydenham is not in his place; therefore I will say nothing about his statement as to the amount of money that ought to have gone to Canterbury. I can only say that, as far as I am informed by those who are best informed on the subject, Canterbury did very well when the change of provincial institutions took place, and that certain little arrangements which took place at that time will hardly bear the light of scrutiny. I will only say one or two words on the Bill, because, as a member of the Waste Lands Committee, I shall have an opportunity of discussing it with greater information before me on another occasion; but on the general principle involved I should like to say one or two words. I do not for one moment blame the Government for having taken this land under the provisions of the Land and Income Assessment Act. If they had—as they appear to have had—proper valuers, they were quite justified in doing what they did. But that is where I begin to differ from them. It seems to me that the first object after the Land and Income Assessment Act had been vindicated, so to speak, by their taking this land, should have been to get rid of it as quickly as possible, without loss to the colony. Now, it seems to me that, as a mere matter of book-keeping, it would have been far better if this land had been cut up into reasonable blocks and put up for sale, the Land Department buying in what they required for

experimental purposes. It seems to me a very dangerous precedent for the Land- and Income-tax Department to lend themselves to experiments in land-settlement. And even in spite of the very glowing description of the Minister of Lands, and the exceedingly moderate nature of his remarks, I do not yet see that we are sure to come out quite safe. There is a certain amount of general vagueness about this Bill which caused me to note on it, the first time I saw it, "This is a Bill to give the Minister power to do anything he likes, independently of the Land Act." And I see no reason to alter the judgment I first formed on it. There is a little thing here which I should like to call attention to, and that is in regard to the statement that the Government could have resold the estate at a profit. I dare say a good many inquiries have been made about this estate, but I am sorry to say that I have never heard anything which would bear out the statements which have been made, beyond an application for a lease. But, even if it were so, surely it is improbable that the Minister, after having taken over this land under the provisions of the Land and Income Assessment Act, would be able at once to secure that which the trustees of the property had been unable to obtain for years. The trustees, as we know, have been making the greatest exertions to dispose of the land: in fact, we know they were under positive compulsion to sell the land, inasmuch as the different people interested in the property were practically forcing them to do so. Indeed, I think the trustees are to be congratulated on the result of the sale. But there is another portion of the Bill which seems to me somewhat curious. I have some little knowledge of the Government way of dealing with Crown lands in my own district. I may safely say that whenever I have had the honour of waiting upon the Minister of Lands with the humble request to make some little road to open up some ninety thousand acres of land in my district the first question put to me has been, "What can we borrow on it?" But difficulties of that sort have not arisen in this case. The reason I refer to this matter is that the acreage acquired in my own district during the past few years nearly corresponds with the area of the Cheviot Estate. Yet the Cheviot Estate is referred to as a sort of Eden, where not only roads but railroads are shown—railroads that are not needed for the next fifty years, and the appearance of which on the maps, if the railways are not made, will give rise to claims for compensation by the Government for not carrying out their promises in regard to the railway. We are told that there is a large staff of surveyors at work on the estate. I should like to point out in this connection that the surveys have been continuously behindhand in the Auckland District for many years, and many persons have had to find their own surveyors to overtake some of the work. The estimate of the charges for roading, surveying, *et cetera*, is £50,000. In section 18 the Government take the power to make and to maintain all the roads through the district. All I can say is that I wish there

was a second Cheviot in my district. It seems to me that the Government are about to make the settlement of this land a hobby, and will spend money there which ought to be spent on other surveys and roads in the colony. I cannot for one moment expect that the Minister will put a railroad in the newly-settled part of my district, but I do hope he will apply to that district the conditions of section 18, in which he has so generously provided for the land dealt with in this Bill. There is only one further remark I need make, and that is this: that, in my opinion, it was rather ungenerous of the Minister to say that if the House will approve of this purchase other large estates will be acquired. And yet in another connection he said that the Government were obliged to take this particular estate because otherwise certain other large estates would have got off paying their proper share of taxation. Now, I say that is ungenerous. Surely we have had enough of this sort of talk of large estates—of these references to social pests, and so forth. Surely we might leave these people alone, and content ourselves with simply saying that the law is the same for both large and small—that in all cases we are determined equally to give the option either of taking the estates when the valuation is objected to, or of lowering the assessment, in the case of small estates as well as in regard to those of large extent. I will only point out, further, that it is a rather dangerous precedent to establish, if we should ever have a subservient Commissioner of Taxes, that the land should be taken for settlement purposes with such an arrangement in the way of book-keeping as we have in this case, if one can judge from what is shown in this Bill. I do not object at all to the experiment we are making, so far as it goes, but I do very much object to its being done as part of the working of the Land and Income-tax Department instead of being dealt with simply as a question for the Lands Department; and I do not yet see how we are going to justify the expenditure the Minister is undertaking on that Cheviot Estate under the conditions of the Land and Income Assessment Act. With these remarks, Sir, I will leave the Bill alone until it comes to us from the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—The Cheviot Estate has played so important a part in the history of the Provincial District of Nelson that I approach the subject like an old acquaintance. I feel very considerable satisfaction with the action which the Government have taken in this matter. In fact, I do not know of anything that the Government has done upon which I so entirely agree with them as in the acquisition of this estate. I have been able to sympathize with the Opposition upon some questions, but in this matter I have no sympathy whatever with them. On the contrary, the more strongly the large landholders condemn the action of the Government in this matter the more certain I feel that the Government have acted rightly. It would have been the signal for the universal undervaluing of large estates

if the Government had shown timidity in the matter of taking a large estate like this. The leader of the Opposition has told us that the Act was probably not intended to be applied to large estates. Well, Sir, if it was not intended to apply to large estates it should never have been placed on the statute-book, because it certainly gives great facilities for forcing an undervaluation on the Government; and without the power of purchase, and the means to purchase, an estate, however large, the Government would have to helplessly accept whatever valuation the owner chose to put upon it. I think that, when the Act was proposed, the clause in the Act giving power to call upon the Government to purchase—or the same principle, at any rate—was proposed by a large landowner. When we were considering the first land-tax, or the property-tax, I am not sure which, Mr. Sutton, of Napier, I believe, was the man who proposed it should be introduced into one of our Bills. The Act having made no proper provision as to how the money was to be obtained for the purchase of such a large estate, I quite agree with the leader of the Opposition that it was a very bold step on the part of the Government to take it as they did. But my experience of public life is this: that you can never be too bold as an Executive so long as you are honest and not extravagant. In such matters the righteous may be "bold as a lion." And I am quite sure that any Government which honestly takes an estate of this kind, rather than allow the public to lose by a general undervaluation of other large estates, will be supported by the honest and disinterested opinion of the House and of the country. One thing that I blame the Government for is not for being too bold, but for not being bold enough. In determining upon the acquisition of this particular estate I admit that they ran a considerable risk, and they proved themselves, I think, very good generals in the way they obtained the money for buying the estate. At the same time, I think, if we ceased to make as many railways as we do, it would be very desirable that we should acquire estates of this kind and make good use of them, as I believe we shall make of this. There was but one way to make this purchase an immediate success: it is a very evident way, and yet it is a way that no speaker has mentioned yet as regards this case, and yet it appears to be so extremely clear that they ought to have taken that way that I wonder no one has said anything about it. Sir, you could not make this land pay during the first year in any other way than by keeping the sheep on the land. Without the sheep the land is of very little use to any one for a few months. That would have been the right course for the Government to take. They should have spent £70,000 in buying the sheep, and they would have had a return of £30,000 the first year. That would have proved a good bargain. The honourable member for Halswell will admit, perhaps, that I have had some experience of what I say with regard to the boldness with which public men should act in certain cases.

Mr. Lake

He was Provincial Secretary in Canterbury when the West Coast goldfields were so suddenly "rushed," and the Provincial Executives of Canterbury and Nelson had to suddenly meet all kinds of emergencies.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—We cannot hear a word over here of what the honourable gentleman is saying.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Honourable gentlemen must really keep order.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I was referring, Sir, to the time when the diggings broke out on the west coast of the other Island, and I have no doubt that the honourable member for Halswell will remember that we found it necessary there to take some very bold steps indeed. I know that, as Superintendent of Nelson, I was all at once advised, when sixty thousand men had come over to Westland, to call the Provincial Council together to decide upon what we should do. Instead of doing that, I went round to the West Coast myself, and for six weeks I was travelling around amongst these men,—and, although our revenue rose to three times more than it had ever been before, there was not a penny voted for expenditure on roads in that district. I therefore set to work spending all I could get, and I went on in that way until the usual time for the Council meeting. When the Council met they did not complain, nor did they disallow a single sixpence I had spent. Therefore I feel that, as long as you go to work in the public interest, public men ought not to indulge in too much timidity on occasions of that kind. Then, Sir, there is another way in which the Government should spend more money than they have spent, and that is, they should get to work with the drain-plough. Sheep get foot-rot and crops get drowned on the best of the flat lands. This land should be drained by the drain-plough, and I believe that if the drain-plough were set to work on this land the Minister of Lands would find it would pay over and over again in the price at which the land would sell. There is another thing I should like to have seen this purchase put to, and that is the creation of an industrial farm. I know of no spot that would be more suitable for such a purpose than would be this Cheviot Estate. The mere fact of its being a long way from towns and cities would, in my opinion, be distinctly an advantage. A great many of those who need assistance of that kind often need that assistance simply from their own incapability of resisting temptations they find in the cities; and I say, therefore, the further they are removed from the neighbourhood of cities and placed on land in a thoroughly good climate, such as this land enjoys, the better it will be for their welfare and for the success of the industrial institution. There is good water-carriage—carriage that would bring the necessaries of life to the spot, and which would take away their produce at very reasonable rates—at a much lower rate, at all events, than many farmers have to pay now who are not one quarter of the distance from the markets. I do not think there would be any difficulty either with regard to fuel where

the water-carriage is so near, and where there are some hundreds of acres of plantations thirty years old. There are, if my memory serves me, some one hundred and fifty acres of plantations, the timber from which would supply any amount of firewood; and I think, in short, we could not get a more suitable place for such a purpose as I have indicated. I hope the Bill will be supported, as I feel sure it will be, by the House, and that we shall make the best use of this purchase, and that we shall always give the Government instructions to do the same thing if the same opportunity offers, rather than allow all large estates to be systematically undervalued for taxation purposes.

Mr. SANDFORD.—Before this Bill goes to the Waste Lands Committee I should like to offer a few remarks upon some of its provisions which I think should be amended there. I have no doubt at all as to the wisdom of the Government in acquiring the estate. I am equally assured that the position they have taken up as regards this estate will, to a very great extent, lessen the claims to reduce the values placed on other large estates in the colony, and it was imperative upon them to acquire the estate unless they were prepared to concede considerable reductions in assessment all round. However, as the honourable member for Selwyn has just said, I hope this will only prove to be the first of a number of estates which will be taken under like conditions. I quite recognise, with the Minister of Lands, that the success or failure of this purchase means either the carrying-on of the policy of the Government in the matter of acquiring large estates, or the hanging-up of that policy for many years to come, and I quite sympathize with him in his desire to make it a financial as well as a settlement success. At the same time, I very much regret that the Government have not had the courage to face the difficulty as some in this House would wish them to face it, and as, I believe, many in the country would wish to see them face it—namely, by raising the cost of the estate on debentures, and retaining the whole of the land for leasing. I am quite aware, with the honourable member for Inangahua, that we are in a very small minority in this House when we talk of retaining the fee-simple in the hands of the Government. But we are hoping for better times; and, so long as I am in this House, whenever the question of parting with the freehold is raised, I shall enter my protest against that being done. Having said this much, I should like to draw the attention of the Minister and of the Waste Lands Committee to some points in the Bill which, to my mind, are exceedingly weak. In the first place the Bill should have limited very distinctly the proportion and quality of the land in the estate which may be sold for cash. The Bill states that "one-third portion thereof shall be sold for cash by public auction," but the proviso to that clause says, "The proportions of land before mentioned may be varied or altered by the Minister from time to time." I do not doubt that whilst the present Minister of Lands holds office the amount of land so

for cash will be kept within very moderate limits; but I am aware that the times change, and the Ministry of to-day may be the Opposition of to-morrow. Political life is very uncertain in this colony, and I dread the advent of a Minister of Lands from the present Opposition benches with such a clause as this in the Bill, for I feel assured that if such a thing occurred it would be not merely a third of the estate that would be sold for cash. We should probably find that the then Minister of Lands would hold it to be wise to vary the proportion, and that that variation would mean that the largest part of the estate would be sold for cash. And, with every respect for our present Minister, I would urge him, in view of such a possibility, to excoise this power of varying the amounts to be disposed of by leasehold or for cash. Then, there is another point. There is no limit whatever in the Bill to the amount of land which may be sold with the mansion. There is a side-note which refers to five thousand acres, but the body of the Bill fixes no limit; and I think it should be distinctly stated before the Bill leaves this House; otherwise the Minister may find that he has to dispose of not five thousand acres, but ten or fifteen thousand acres. Unless this clause is amended by the Waste Lands Committee, or, at any rate in Committee of the House, I shall find it my unpleasant duty to vote against the Government in this connection. Another very weak point in the Bill is this: that the protection we had in the Land Act of last session against lands being bought for speculative purposes for cash is wanting in this Bill—I refer to the improvement clause. Honourable members are fully aware that the Act of last session specifies that there shall be a certain amount of improvements made upon land sold for cash, before the issue of a Crown grant. In this Bill, however, as soon as the price is paid for the land, without the slightest stipulation for improvements the Crown grant may be issued. I see no reason why this land should not be similarly protected to other Crown lands. Another provision I find absent from the Bill is compulsory residence on lands that are leased. There is no provision in this Bill for compulsory residence. Clause 12 is a general clause which specifies that the Minister may make regulations, but it limits these regulations to the cropping and using of the land; and I very much question whether the Minister would have the power to provide for compulsory residence. It is also specified that this Bill shall be read subject to the provisions of the Land Act; but we have special provisions here which must be regarded before the general provisions of the Land Act can apply. In the matters to which I have referred—improvement and residence—no doubt should exist as to the intention of any Act passed dealing with this estate. Taking the Bill as a whole, the Minister of Lands has handled a most difficult task as well as we could have expected; but, to my mind, the Bill is a distinctly retrograde step, and I hope that when it comes back from the Waste Lands Committee, or, at any rate, in Commit-

tee of the House, it will be very considerably modified, and that those opposed to the sale of land for cash at all will have less to find fault with in the measure than they have at present.

Mr. FISH.—Sir, the Bill at present before the House is chiefly remarkable for one thing, and that is the exceeding and wonderful inconsistency of the Government in connection with their land policy, and more particularly that of the Minister of Lands. Any member of this House who recalls to his mind the passage of the Land Bill of last session through the House cannot fail to be struck with the thorough inconsistency between the action of the Minister of Lands now and the action he then took with regard to the land question. On that occasion it was lands in perpetuity, lands in perpetuity, and nothing else. I believe, if a proposal had been made on the floor of this House last session for the acquisition of lands by purchase, my honourable friend would have endeavoured to sink through the floor of the chamber, and would have disappeared from view. And yet we find him, like a prize-fighter after a knock-down blow, coming up smiling and proposing the resumption of the sale of lands for cash without any settlement conditions. Can he justify himself in such a purchase as this, when the purchase entails on him and the Ministry the sacrifice of a great and noble principle of which he was so eloquent an expounder less than twelve months ago? Oh, Sir, what a falling-off is there! I told him the same last session with regard to what I termed his eternal lease. I tell him now the same thing when I find him reverting to the old system of the sale of lands for cash. The honourable gentleman opened his speech to-day by saying that he had no doubt there were great differences of opinion as to whether the Government should have bought this land or not. He is quite right in this, because there is a very great difference of opinion throughout the country as to whether the Minister is right on this question or not. The country is not represented by a few of the residents round that small piece called Cheviot; neither, may I remind the honourable member for Christchurch City, is Canterbury—great province though it be—the whole of the colony. The honourable gentleman may rest assured that there is a very strong and large difference of opinion as to the propriety of the Government buying this land. We were told when the Land for Settlements Bill was passing through the House that it was the intention or desire of the Government to purchase lands during any session not exceeding the value of £50,000, and they were to be agricultural lands, and to be sold in small areas. How does the honourable gentleman carry out his promise in this respect with regard to this land? We have here purchased a large quantity of land, the greater part of which is admittedly not agricultural nor fitted for close settlement, but pastoral land which the Government are compelled to let in blocks of not less than five thousand acres. Again I say, with pain, what a falling-

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off is there! Then, I would ask the honourable gentleman, what legal right had he to commit the colony to the purchase of a quarter of a million's worth of land? He took power only to expend £50,000, and, if my memory serves me rightly, a schedule of this land was to be laid on the table of the House previous to the actual purchase of it.

AN HON. MEMBER.—No; after it was done.

MR. FISH.—Yes; but in this case the honourable gentleman has committed the colony to an expenditure of a quarter of a million—expenditure which the honourable gentleman and the Government knew when they were purchasing the colony was unable to meet out of legitimate revenue; and that is the reason we find this departure from the adopted policy of the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman cannot, nor can his Government, shelter themselves under the statement, or the plea, that they were compelled to buy this land under the terms of the Land and Income Assessment Act. We are told this was the cause which induced them, or forced them, to purchase the estate. Sir, what nonsense that is! The honourable gentleman tells us that the trustees of the land failed to do so-and-so, and so the Land- and Income-tax Agents were bound to do so-and-so; and so, the difference between the valuations by the department and by the trustees being £44,000, because there was this difference, and because the trustees offered to sell the land to the Government at their own price, they were compelled to take it, in order to protect the revenue of the colony. Can any statement be more absurd, or less worthy of credence, than this? What would have been the loss to the colony? Exactly forty-four thousand pennies per annum; and does the honourable gentleman mean to tell me that the sacrifice of so small an amount of revenue was a sufficient justification to him to break the law, which he practically has done by compelling the colony to accept this purchase? Why, the idea will not hold water for a moment. But my honourable friends say, "Oh! if we had reduced the valuation on this property we should have had to reduce it on others." Well, Sir, supposing they had, what would that have mattered? The honourable gentleman spoke as if the acceptance of a reduction of valuation was a new thing. May I ask him whether there have not been dozens of cases where a reduced value has been accepted, which has been the value that the owner of the land put on the property? If the honourable gentleman says that this would have induced the offer of other parcels of land to the Government for settlement purposes, that would have been no harm. It would have been a good thing, according to his dictum, and he might have had land offered under similar circumstances in other parts which would have suited the colony just as well, and might have been acquired at a less price than this. And it seems to me to be a very funny thing. Who, in the name of fortune, should know the real value of land better than those who offered it for sale? But we are told by some honourable

gentleman who spoke to day that peculiar circumstances surrounding this estate induced the trustees to sell at a low price. I will accept the statement as correct; and, if it is correct, does it not follow, as a matter of course, that if the Government had not taken the land the trustees of the estate must have necessarily cut it up themselves, and have secured the very same result as the Government hope to secure now, *minus* the expenditure of £50,000 for making roads and surveys? And, with regard to this £50,000, is it to be accepted for a moment as a doctrine which this House must adopt that the Government of the day may place the colony, or this House, in such a position that outside the purchase of land they are compelled to spend on an estate, in order to settle and cut it up, the large sum of £50,000? How far that would go in opening up unsettled districts in various portions of the colony? And is it fair to other portions of the colony? I do not want to raise district antagonism, but it must be patent to numbers of members, as it is to myself, although I have no special knowledge, that there are many portions of the colony, in the North Island more particularly, where the expenditure of £50,000 would result in an immense amount of good to the district within which the money might be expended. Then, what have we got besides? We find in this Bill that it is provided that the land shall be sold at such a price as will cover the cost of survey, road-making, and other expenses. Now, it is very easy indeed to put a clause of this kind upon the statute-book, but it is beyond the power of the honourable gentleman, or of any member of the House, to carry out that law if the carrying-out of it raises the price of the land beyond its market-value; and this land when put up for auction will fetch neither more nor less than its market-value, quite irrespective of the amount the Government may have laid out upon it to make it fit for settlement. Then the Government will not get a price to cover cost. Therefore it is quite on the cards that the honourable gentleman may find he has landed the country in a severe loss as the result of this purchase, and may have to admit, as we all admit now, that he has entered into a speculative affair which is beyond the functions of good government. I cannot escape from the reflection myself. Sir, I earnestly hope, now that the thing is completed, that the honourable gentleman's predictions may be verified, and that he will not only sell the land at no loss to the country, but will also secure settlement of a good character. And I would point out again, before I go further, that there is a total abandonment in this Bill of all the principles—which the honourable gentleman told us and the country he laid so much store by—that are contained in the Land Act passed last session. There is, first of all, the sale of land for cash without a non-residence or residence clause, and without various other provisions which we were told on a previous occasion were of the most fundamental character, and necessary to be carried in the interests of the country. These are all absent

from this Bill now. I have never yet heard it justified or seen it proved that, for a special purpose, it was a proper thing to depart from what was a sound principle, and in this Bill the honourable gentleman has undoubtedly done so. I have already said the honourable gentleman made a remark in his speech that the question arose whether this afforded an opportunity of acquiring a valuable piece of land, highly suitable for settlement. Of course, no doubt that question did arise; but I say, again, the policy of the Government was to buy agricultural land, and agricultural land alone, and he has entirely departed from that policy in this purchase. Sir, it is quite refreshing to listen to another statement the honourable gentleman made, and, personally, I really compliment the honourable gentleman on his change of front and on his change of opinion. It is my opinion that both he and his colleagues were taking retrograde steps as fast as they could at the dictation of Demos; but, if we are to believe the statement he made in his speech, there are signs, and I hope strong signs, of the resuscitation of the honourable gentleman to a sound state of political health, because he tells us, in connection with the settlement of this estate, he has three great objects in view—capital, experience, and labour. We have for the past two years in this House been treated to only one phase of the social problem—labour, labour, labour, nothing but labour. It was all labour. Capital was to be thrown to the winds; capitalists were to be driven into the sea; capitalists were no aid to progress; labour was all that was wanted. But now, I am glad to say, the honourable gentleman has propounded a new theory, and I trust he will stick to it for a longer time than he has stuck to his land propositions as made last session of this Parliament. Now, Sir, he also said that he had been urged by a large number that the whole of the land should be sold by public auction. He had also been urged by another section of the community to provide that the whole of it should be sold on perpetual lease; and he had also been told by another section that the whole of it should be parted with on lease in perpetuity. Now, I think this one thing should teach him a lesson which he and the Government generally would do well to profit by—that, as long as there are diversified opinions upon any great question, it becomes the honourable gentlemen on those benches, having the responsibility of governing this colony on their shoulders, not to listen to, or, rather, I would not go so far as to say not to listen to, but not to act upon every diverse opinion. It is their duty to take the common-sense course, and the one which will redound most to the credit and profit of the colony, and not to listen to the nostrums of extremists on one side or the other. The honourable gentleman has, to some extent, tried to carry out the three courses indicated by these three sections of the community in this Bill. We can see him tinkering with each party, and trying to satisfy each in turn; and I venture to say that

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if he persists in the three systems he will end, as a result, by pleasing none of these parties. A man who tries to please everybody must fall to the ground ultimately. It is only a question of time. The man who sticks firm to a conviction, who holds by it, is the man who, like myself, will do what is best for the interests of the country. The honourable member for Inangahua laughs at that. I do not know what causes his merriment, but I say without egotism there are very few men in this colony that have survived the political storms of a lifetime so long as I have, and there are very few men, I am proud to say, who have been longer in public life than myself, in one capacity or another. To revert to what I started with: believe, myself, with the honourable member for Inangahua, that the honourable gentleman should strike out of this Bill the clause which refers to any land being parted with on lease in perpetuity; and I also agree with the honourable member for Inangahua that the lease in perpetuity is a fraud and a sham; and, Sir, I will ask the honourable member for Inangahua to do another thing, and that is, to be more charitable to myself in the future. He has more than once during the present session said, "as to anything that honourable gentleman proposed or said, it is only necessary for him to propose it, and I would oppose him, and go into the opposite lobby against him." I promise the honourable gentleman that if he divides the House on this particular clause I will gladly go into the same lobby with him, because I shall be voting for a principle which I thoroughly and heartily believe in, and it matters not to me if it was the Prince of Darkness I was supporting, so long as he led me in a right direction, and in one better for myself and for the interests of the country. My opinion is, with the honourable member for Inangahua, that we should not part from this time forth with a single acre of our land for cash. I said three years ago on the hustings, and I say it now, that we should not part with one single acre of our land for cash from now henceforth. The only system, in my opinion, on which we should part with our land is upon perpetual lease with periodical valuation. And I tell the honourable gentleman this: that, if he can see his way to finance so as to do without the sale of this land for cash, he will find in a short time,—because it is a short time in the history of a nation, some thirty years—the benefit the colony will reap from having the land let on perpetual lease with a periodical valuation. I do not know whether the honourable gentleman will see his way to go as far as that—I fear he will not; but, if he can, I should feel no objection to the purchase, and I should look upon the system with greater pleasure than I do now. And, Sir, what I pointed out last session has come to the front this session with regard to this Bill; and it must be apparent to those outside this House who urged the Minister to sell the whole of this land on lease in perpetuity that he cannot make bricks without straw, and that he is forced into one of two positions: he must

finance in some way to obtain money at a reasonable rate of interest, or he must sell some of the land to enable him to go on. As to the modes of selling the land, the honourable gentleman says that his own opinion was he should have a mixture. Well, he has got a mixture; but I say it is a bad mixture. It is not a good Scotch mixture. It is a mixture with a halfpenny-worth of all sorts in it. There was a remark made by the late Minister of Lands with regard to a railway route being placed upon the map. Well, I do not think buyers will be particularly deceived by that being there, and, if they are, it will be their own fault; but at the same time I think it would have been as well that no indication, however remote, should be given to intending purchasers of an intention of the Government to build a railway there. We may have a repetition of what has occurred in the past, and have intending settlers coming many years hence and demanding all sorts of things because the Government have not carried out the promise of a railway, and they would produce this map in furtherance of their claims. I am sorry the honourable member for Ashley is gone. He told us something about Joshua. I do not know why he should have referred to Joshua.

Sir R. STOUT.—Who?

Mr. FISH.—Joshua—the Biblical Joshua. He stated, referring to this land of Goshen which the Minister of Lands has picked out, that Joshua sent two men to spy out the land in olden times. I believe that is a Biblical and historical fact. I need not remind the House what kind of place these two men landed in in the evening. I trust that, if the honourable member for Ashley went to spy out this land, neither he nor the man who went with him landed in a place of the same sort as the two gentlemen whom our old and ancient friend Joshua sent out to spy the land of Goshen. Then, Sir, it was most interesting to hear the patriarch of the House rise up just now. I really thought, when the honourable gentleman began to speak about this purchase, that he was about to weep tears of joy that one of the dearest wishes of his heart had been realised by the action of the Minister. If so, that, I hope, will convince my honourable friend that there is so much good in the Ministry as will induce him not to desert the fold and vote against them to carry out something of far less importance. I hope the action of the Minister will bring joy to his heart in this most important question of land-settlement. Then, the honourable gentleman told the Minister something else—and this is a lesson to the Government to show the lengths to which some of their rash supporters would try to lead them—and I would here again express the hope that the Minister of Lands and the Government generally will put their foot down against these ridiculous suggestions made from time to time by some of the most rabid of their supporters; and, if they pursue a safe medium course, they may lose two or three of those objectionable supporters, but

they will get men to support them on whom they can place more reliance, and they can depend upon it that this medium course will give better satisfaction to the country. The honourable gentleman suggested that the Government might have gone further and indulged in the luxury of sheep-farming, and then they would have realised a good profit. He said they ought to have introduced the drain-plough and ploughed up the land. Where is this folly going to cease? When are we going to legislate on important matters with some regard to common-sense and sound judgment? And when are we going to cease to have such nostrums as these inflicted upon us by gentlemen who parade their age and length of time in this House, and the lands they have visited, so often as the honourable gentleman to whom I have alluded? Then, again, Sir, we were to have had an industrial farm settled on this estate. I suppose the best of this land will be worth £10 to £15 per acre. I presume that is so, because the honourable gentleman must get that for the block, if he is to realise what he expects. We are told that the Government should establish an industrial farm in this same block. Well, I know nothing about farming myself, but it seems to me to be opposed to common-sense to suggest that some of the best land on this estate should be set aside for an experiment as an industrial farm—that is, I understand, to place men on the ground who know little or nothing about farming. When are we to be rid of this stuff—this foolish nonsense that we are told of, and spoken of, as if it were good common-sense? I will make a suggestion to the honourable gentleman, so as not to be outdone entirely by my honourable friend the member for Selwyn. I would suggest to the Minister in charge of the Bill that he should build Salvation Army barracks there, and he might also go a little further and, instead of selling the mansion, with the five thousand acres attached, he might go in for a lunatic asylum, where some of those extreme supporters of the Government might, in time, find a haven. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), in trying to induce the honourable gentleman to recede from the position he assumed in connection with this Bill, drew a picture of what might occur when another Minister of Lands sat in his place. I do not know how soon a change of Government may take place, but things change very suddenly just now, though, perhaps, their termination of their official life may be further off than some members of this House may think or desire. I think the present Ministry may last so long, at any rate, as to settle the land on the Cheviot Estate. If the honourable gentleman is here for another twelve months—if the verdict of the country returns him in a majority when Parliament is again called together—whether this will be so I cannot say, but I think it will greatly depend on the advice I give to the electors as to whether this will occur or not. The honourable gentleman, if he is twelve months in office, he will, I

take it, before that time expires, have taken steps to settle the best part of that estate; therefore no danger can arise from the fear of another Minister of Lands being in office. I say this distinctly: that if we are to have an extension of the lease in perpetuity, to the exclusion of the perpetual lease with a revaluation, I would sooner see every acre of land yet remaining in the hands of the Government sold for cash. I would sooner see that to-morrow, because I again reiterate my entire and absolute approval of the sentiment expressed by the honourable member for Inangahua, that the lease-in-perpetuity system is a fraud and a sham; and I hope to live to see the day, and long after the day, when that principle will be effaced from the statute-book of this colony. I can only say this—and it is the only excuse I can offer for my honourable friend, whom I have known so long, and whose opinions I know to be opposed to the policy he has resorted to: that pressure was brought to bear upon him which he was not able to resist. That is his only excuse, and it is the real truth of the matter. We shall have another opportunity of speaking on this Bill, so that I do not intend to detain the House any longer. There are several clauses here which I will take another opportunity of referring to. In all probability, the Bill will be slightly amended when it goes to the Waste Lands Committee. I have already told the House that I objected to the purchase of this land. I do not think, with the honourable member for Inangahua, that the Government have acted in the best interests of the country over the purchase. I do not think it should have been purchased: but, as it is now a fact that we have the land, we must get rid of it, and therefore it is the duty of the House to get rid of it in the most satisfactory manner, and I shall give my honourable friend my best assistance in dealing with this measure in such a way as will conduce to the best interests of the country. I trust, as I have said before, that the honourable gentleman may see his way, and that a majority of this House may see their way, when the Bill is in Committee, to strike out the lease in perpetuity, even if it be at the expense of increasing the amount of land that will be sold for cash, and increasing the amount of country that will be parted with on perpetual lease.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—The honourable member for Dunedin City has given us a fairly long speech, and I must say it is somewhat difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff; but there are a few points which I think it may be necessary to notice. The honourable member seems to have mistaken the position in connection with the purchase of the Cheviot Estate. He has mixed it up with the Land for Settlements Act, and he seems unable to separate the two. He seems to think that if this purchase had not been made a very large amount would have been spent, probably, in acquiring Native lands, or other land in some other part of the colony. But this is a mistake. There was no alternative, if I under-

stand the position—no other course to take than that adopted by the Government, who in this case, I unhesitatingly say, have shown good sound business capacity in purchasing the land as they have done. Of course, this matter of finding land for settlement has been preached on almost every platform for some years past, and it has been admitted that it would be wise if possible to repurchase some of these large estates. There can be no doubt also that the people have been looking forward earnestly to the present Government to move in this direction. It has also been said by the Opposition that anything in this direction meant confiscation.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—I am very much pleased to hear those who have now spoken admit that, at any rate, the first and only purchase made by the Government is not one of that stamp. Sir, the honourable member for Dunedin City seemed to treat very flippantly the amount of money that the Government could save by taking over this estate under the Land and Income Assessment Act, illustrating it as simply a small sum of forty-four thousand pennies. Well, even forty-four thousand pennies mean a pretty good sum when we have nothing in our pockets. But this was dealing with an estate that had been offered to the Government on certain terms, and, if not accepted then, there would be a great number of persons in this colony, both small and large landowners, who might consider themselves aggrieved. If that machinery meant anything under which the valuations were made, it meant that what is fair for one is fair for another; and for any Government to recede from such a position, and admit that their Assessors and Reviewers and their valuations were wrong to the extent of £44,000, would, to my mind, be absolutely monstrous, and I say fearlessly that such a Government would not be fit to occupy those benches. That is my opinion of it. They should treat the large landowners on the same basis as the small owners. There should be a spirit of equity and fairness. Another statement the honourable gentleman made was that the owners would have sold this estate to some one else who would have founded small settlements. Any one can make an assertion of this kind; but it does not follow that there is much truth in it. The probability is that if any one but the Government had purchased this estate it would have been a large syndicate, who would probably have bought entirely for their own interests, and it would have meant that the small farmer would have had to pay a very large sum before he could get a piece of it. There is no doubt that he would have had to pay twice as much as if he purchased it from the Government. Well, Sir, I do not think that the Minister of Lands has abandoned any principle in this Bill; but I think that underlying this Bill is the one great principle of resumption of some of the large estates on fair and equitable terms. If the Government proceed in this way I fail to understand for one moment that any per-

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son who holds a large acreage in this colony can at all feel aggrieved. I am not one of those who feel very much hurt because a man may own a fairly large estate, so long as he accepts the responsibility attaching to the land and finds employment for those who require it. Well, I contend that the Government in taking over this estate have shown great wisdom; and I would point out to those who now find fault with this clause for selling land for cash that the Government have not a very large sum at their disposal with which to buy estates of this magnitude here and there all over the colony; therefore they have been under the necessity of selling a portion of this land for cash. I know that there are other districts in the colony where it was expected the Government might do something of the same kind. There are the Wairau district and the Nelson district, in which there is very valuable land, most suitable for settlement, that could be purchased, and I hope to hear that the Minister will be able within a reasonable period to secure a portion of that, because it is well known that it would be acquired in the interests of settlement. Then, the honourable member for Halswell found fault with this transaction because he said, Why take it when there is other land for sale? Well, this is the first large estate I have known to have been placed in such circumstances under offer to the Government, and there is no other property we can compare with it, or that is on all-fours with this; and therefore I contend that it was in the interests of settlement, seeing that the Government were authorised under the Land for Settlements Act to buy land and do as they are doing now—that is, to deal with it in the best interests of the general public. The honourable member for Ashburton said this was something of a “white elephant.” All I can say is this: that if it is a white elephant it is certainly a curly-headed one. The number of people of whom I have heard, and the would-be settlers who have written to me on this subject and spoken to me with reference to this estate, show me, at any rate, that if they are not able to obtain a small portion of it there will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth amongst a great number. Therefore I am positive that, as far as this land is concerned, we shall have a large number of applicants for it. I shall not detain the House any longer, but I shall do my best to support this Bill as it goes through. At the same time, I am one of those who do not admire this system of disposing of a portion of the land under lease in perpetuity without some revaluation of the bare land within a reasonable time. I have always held that view, and do not intend to stultify myself now. I have held that view from the very first, and think it would be wise that the colony should insist on revisions at stated periods in these cases.

Mr. DUTHIE.—Sir, I will only offer a few remarks on this subject, and will say, in the first place, that such a purchase was not contemplated when the Land and Income Assessment Act was passed. The money available

under that Act was an indication of the expectation of the House as to the extent to which such purchases might be made; but, looking at the matter in a different aspect, the fact is that this estate was only carrying a sheep and a quarter to an acre, and, looking to what land is worth which will carry that amount of stock, it is evident that the full price has been paid for this land, and I think the only persons who will be satisfied are the vendors. They at least have got a price which they could scarcely have expected to get from a private purchaser. Again, if the Government were entering into the business of land-purchasers, they could have made a better choice. They could have taken land—of which there is plenty—on the roads and railways already constructed; whereas, in regard to this purchase, they must incur a large expenditure in opening it up, and I do not see any prospective return which will recoup the colony for the cost it will be put to. The feature I wish specially to draw attention to is this: that this land was at least yielding a large amount of produce, which formed a considerable item in the exports of the colony, and if the Government had £260,000 available it would have been advantageous to have used that money in opening up Crown lands at present unsurveyed, unroaded, and unavailable for settlement. It would most certainly have thus added largely to the exports of the colony; or, if no Crown lands were available, then it would have been a great advantage to the country if Native lands had been opened up for settlement. Another objectionable feature of this transaction is that it is a further instance of the sly borrowing for which this Government is so distinguished. This is a non-borrowing Government, and yet we have this £260,000, only a small portion of which it is contemplated will be repaid, and the balance is to be added to the permanent debt of the colony. It is in Treasury bills now, but presently it will be converted into stock, and by-and-by it will be put on the London money-market and added to the permanent debt of the colony; while the proceeds of the land will drift into the Land Fund of the colony, and be so expended as revenue. It is only another channel through which the Government are adding to the permanent debt of the colony. I shall not discuss the local aspect of the question, with which other honourable members are better acquainted than I am.

Mr. BRUCE.—My honourable friend the Minister of Lands, in moving the second reading of this Bill, introduced it in a very moderate and temperate speech. He seemed to make the very best of what appears, to me at any rate, a very bad job. It appears from the speeches delivered that there is a large majority of members in favour of the Bill. Of course the measure itself is only a matter of detail, but I wish, Sir, in the few remarks I have to make, to enter my protest against the principle contained in this measure. The honourable gentleman told us it was legislation, in reality, of an experimental character; and such, no doubt, it is. I have not a doubt

myself that if the Government gain nothing else by this transaction they will gain experience. A great deal has been said not merely in the House, but in the country, with regard to this purchase, and as to whether it will turn out a good bargain. I do not intend to address myself to that phase of the question, and for this reason: that it is, to my mind, relatively speaking, an altogether unimportant question. The question the colony has to consider is this: Is the Government justified in going into land-speculation? Is there anything to justify their going into land-speculation? As to the bargain itself, it seems to me that some honourable members have proved too much. They have endeavoured to show that the Government have made a most excellent bargain. For myself, I do not think it at all likely that the trustees, if willing to sell for £260,000, were practically willing to give away £40,000. Now, I would ask the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, and those who are supporting him, what the colony is expected to gain by an experiment of this character. That is really the crucial point of the question. First of all, supposing the colony borrowed a million of money at 4 per cent., and bought a million pounds' worth of land. It cuts up this property, it roads it, it goes to considerable expense in surveying it and roading it, and it leases it to farmers on a 5-per-cent. basis: is there anything to be gained, from a financial point of view, on the part of the colony? Everything going at the best, the State could only come out level. Sir, a great many of these farmers must go down—or, at least, a proportion of them, for I will not say a great many. They will go down in the battle of life, and their farms will be unoccupied. Again, let me ask this question: Is the volume of produce of the country increased thereby? Most certainly not. The Minister in introducing this Bill made a certain remark—that he wished to attract there labour, and capital, and experience. No doubt a great deal of the fallacy of such purchases is based on the assumption that there is no other outlet for labour and capital and experience; but it means merely displacement. If this labour and capital and experience go in one direction they are excluded from another. The quantity of labour and capital that can flow into land in a year is a distinct and definite quantity, not indistinct and indefinite. Again, I would point out, this cannot be relatively a good purchase, because this land is yielding as much produce as it will yield, or nearly so, while there is a great deal of land in the North Island which would justify the Government in purchasing it in the same manner as they have purchased this—namely, with borrowed money. Sir, the honourable member for Dunedin City went at very great length into the necessity or advisability of the Crown retaining what it purchased. Well, for the sake of argument, supposing I were to borrow £1,000 and bought a thousand pounds' worth of land with that money, should I be any the poorer if I were to sell that land again for what I had paid for it?

Mr. Bruce

If the honourable gentleman's reasoning was good, then all the land now occupied in the colony by persons anxious to make it productive is comparatively unproductive to the colony. By logical reasoning we must assume that the land is not being used in the best possible manner. I have already said that so many appear to be in favour of this measure that I only wished to say these few words by way of protest against the Government embarking in a career of land-speculation. This is only the beginning. We have heard the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford) say it is only the beginning. I only hope it will be such an object-lesson to the Government that it will be at once the beginning and the ending of it. I would much rather have the pleasure of getting up and supporting any measure introduced by my honourable friend the Minister of Lands, but I considered it my duty, holding the view I do, to speak in protest in the manner I have done.

Mr. FISHER.—I have already spoken at large on this purchase, and I propose now to make a few very brief remarks in answer to the honourable member for Ashley, the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), and the honourable member for Selwyn, because I do not wish the remarks of those honourable gentlemen to pass without protest. There have been from the first very many mysteries connected with this purchase, which to the present moment remain unanswered, and which will, I believe, remain unanswered to the end. The logical position is this: The Government announced to the House that they made this purchase in order to strengthen their finance. But no honourable member has explained in what way it strengthens their finance. Then, the honourable gentlemen whom I have named said the purchase was made in order to advance the settlement of the country. I should like to ask anybody who knows anything about the estate in what way it is likely to advance settlement. But first, as to the purchase,—and I call the attention of the House to the logical position,—the Government announced to the country, and they have never ceased announcing to the country, that they have a surplus of £500,000. A gentleman whom I do not know, a Mr. Balingier, truthfully announced at a meeting in this city not many nights ago that that surplus is a myth. Had the surplus really existed I could understand this or any Government entering into such a purchase, having the cash in hand; but what have they done? Paid this enormous sum of £260,000 in Treasury bills to a few gentlemen who have had the good fortune to rid themselves of a "white elephant." And what have they done in regard to strengthening their finance? That £260,000 will be added to the funded debt of the colony. The purchase is made on the strength of Treasury bills, but there is not the least doubt that the amount will be added to the permanent debt. But, supposing we purchased with cash in hand, then I approach the position taken up

by the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), and the honourable member for Ashley, who say that this is the only estate that could be purchased. This is one of the mysteries to which I have referred, and to which I wish again to call attention. If they desired the Government of this colony to enter upon such a purchase as this, it ought to have been made through the medium of the Land-purchase Commissioners. We passed last session a Land for Settlements Act. This purchase was made in December, 1892, with the full knowledge that the Land-purchase Commissioners would begin to exercise their functions in two or three months; and, as a fact, they began their duties within two months of this purchase. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford) says it is the duty of the Government to provide land for the settlement of the people. Then why purchase this land? If land were required for the settlement of the people, why not purchase the Woburn Estate, in Hawke's Bay, which was offered to the Government? Why were not the other estates offered to the Government purchased—estates where the land is infinitely superior to this? If land were required for the settlement of the people they could have bought land all over the colony infinitely superior in quality to this. If the honourable member for Avon were now in the House, he would have been able to inform us that, of the 84,000 acres comprising the Cheviot Estate, not more than 20,000 acres is fit for settlement; and what is the Government going to do with the remaining 64,000? It will have to be leased back to the squatters—back to those people from whom it was purchased with the money of the colony. But I have referred to Woburn, and to other similar estates that could have been purchased by the Government. That I take to be the least important argument to put before the people in this colony. I say that the Government, with £260,000 in their hands, could have purchased nearly the whole of the available Native land in the North Island. Sir, is it to be said that these 84,000 acres of land, 20,000 only of which are suitable for settlement, would have provided settlement for the thousands of people that the large area of Native land in the North would have afforded settlement for? I put the matter upon this logical ground, and upon this logical ground the purchase of the Cheviot Estate is indefensible. Sir, it is all very well for those honourable gentlemen to say—and we have their bare statement for it—that this purchase will ultimately yield to the colony 4 per cent. on its cost. There is no gain to the colony in that. The money costs the colony 4 per cent.; and if we only receive a 4-per-cent. return, where is the gain to the colony? We have lost £3,000 payable to the revenue of the colony by the gentlemen who owned the estate. What is the effect? I need not go into it further; I say the Cheviot Estate will never yield 4 per cent. so long as it remains in the hands of the Government. It has been urged that this is a defence of the Government

for having made the purchase, but I say that the estate, with the exception of this 20,000 acres of the land, is totally unfit for settlement—for settlement of a character that they have led the country to believe it was to the interest of the country to acquire. I have nothing further to say, as the Bill is to go to the Waste Lands Committee; but the money of the country has been spent, and it remains for the representatives of the people to make the best of the purchase.

Mr. HARKNESS.—Sir, as the debate has been a prolonged one, I offer no apology for making a few remarks upon the Bill under discussion. Speaking personally, I have little fault to find with the measure as introduced by the Minister of Lands. I regard it as a businesslike proposal for the settlement of this estate, and one that should receive the sanction of this House, and I believe that in the interests of the colony's finance it was absolutely necessary that the Minister should dispose of the land in the way he proposes in this Bill. I believe honourable members—and there are many of them on this side—would like to see the Crown lands of this colony disposed of under perpetual lease. I am a firm believer in the perpetual-lease system; at the same time, I recognise that, when a large estate of this character is purchased at a very high price, it is imperative that there should be some speedy return for the money expended in the purchasing of that estate. It is quite right of the Minister to dispose of one-third of that estate for cash, and there is every probability, looking at it as a business transaction, it will be in the best interests of the colony. I do not want to take up the time of the House in discussing the Bill, but to review briefly the action of Government intriguing, which I fear will result disastrously to the colony. The Minister of Lands, in introducing this Bill to-day, stated that the Government purchased this estate to strengthen and protect their finance. That was a perfectly legitimate object for the Minister of Lands and for the Government to consider if they treated for the purchase for the sole purpose of protecting their finance. It was the bounden duty of the Government, if that was the case, to have sold it in one lot for cash, or to have cut it up and to have then disposed of it to recoup themselves the amount that they paid for it out of the Treasury. But we find that the Government did not adopt that course, and for the following reason: Before they purchased this estate they had reports from several gentlemen, one of whom was Mr. Marchant, Crown Lands Commissioner in Canterbury. His opinion was asked in reference to this matter. It is in this correspondence, and is available to all members interested in the facts pertaining to the purchase. He writes as follows in his report, dated the 31st October, 1892:—

"It is very questionable whether the department could expect to quit the estate as a whole, or even if subdivided into several large blocks, without considerable risk and after much delay. It is needless to enlarge upon

the self-evident difficulties, dangers, and drawbacks which would beset the department in carrying out so novel and large an undertaking. Under such circumstances I could not advise that the estate be taken over."

Evidently, Mr. Marchant was fully conversant with the matter, and would not advise the Board to purchase this estate. What followed? The Government thought, Here is a splendid opportunity of putting before the country our policy of bursting up the large estates. It seems that the Government were not satisfied with the opinion of Mr. Marchant, and they sent it back to him with a request to "cook" a report for them.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—No.

Mr. HARKNESS.—That is the fact; and I ask the indulgence of the House while I read the correspondence, which has escaped the attention of honourable members. This is a letter from Mr. Crombie, dated the 18th December, 1892:—

"I learn that the Premier considers your report hostile to the assessment of the Cheviot Hills Estate, and that valuation should be reduced. Please telegraph to me, stating whether this is the correct interpretation of your report. You appear to me to have made your report somewhat ambiguous by the sentence on the sixth page, commencing, 'It is, however, questionable,' and, 'It is needless to enlarge upon self-evident difficulties,' &c. You seem under the belief that the property, if taken over, would be taken over by the Land-tax Department, and sold by it."

Mr. Marchant replied as follows:—

"24th November, 1892.

"It seems to me that I could not have given my opinion plainer. What I intended to convey was that, having already given as plainly as I could my opinion on assumption that you would require promptly to realise the cost price, I could not give a further opinion on the question until you stated clearly terms and consideration of sale, which you said would be fixed by Order in Council.

"To sum up, I claim that my report plainly deprecates your taking the estate in expectation of finding a cash purchaser or purchasers, but, on the other hand, that I advocated the acquisition on certain definite lines set forth on page 6; and I venture to think my views are correct."

So we see Mr. Marchant clearly states that it is impossible to find a cash purchaser for the whole of the estate: yet the Minister of Lands told us to-day when introducing this Bill that it was possible for him to have sold the freehold of this estate at practically an advance. If an offer of £50,000 could have been got, over and above the £262,000 paid for the property, it was the bounden duty of the Government to have taken that, and thus have really shown that their motive was to protect the revenue. Had it been sold by the Land-tax Department, the better course would have been for the Government to have retained as much for settlement purposes as they required, and to have allowed the balance to be sold. That

Mr. Harkness

was not, however, the policy of the Government. Their policy was indicated by the Minister of Education when speaking at Nelson. He was referring to the Cheviot Estate, and regarding the purchase he said, "It was a sign of the times, and the beginning of a process that was going to break up the big estates." Sir, the Government came in on a bursting-up policy. They were bound to take this property. They had attempted nothing in this direction so far; but under the land-tax, with a view to declaring to the whole colony that they intended to burst up the large estates, they took this at the valuation of the persons who owned the property. If the statement of the Minister of Lands is correct, that the Government bought this property to protect their finances, then the statement of the Minister of Education is wrong. If the statement made by the Minister of Education is correct, then the statement made by the Minister of Lands to-day is wrong. Let the House and the country decide which of those two statements is right. Coming now to the estate, we find that the property had been purchased for £262,000, at the rate of £3 2s. per acre, which is a loss to the colony per annum of something like £10,500 in interest alone; and there was a further loss of £3,000 to the land-tax of the colony, making a total loss of £13,500. Against that we have an amount of £8,800 for rent. On the amount of £262,000 we may get an income-tax of £500. It is stated that the Government have got the money now, and it is taxable. Supposing the money still to be in the colony, it is removable: land is not. We must bear this fact in mind: that money is a vanishing quantity, and may be here to-day and gone to-morrow. I say, looking at all these facts, we make a loss of £4,200. Then, there are large tracts of this estate where the land is light, and it will not pay any single individual to take it up in small-sized blocks as described in the plan, and I doubt very much whether, if cut up as indicated, purchasers will be able to make a living out of it. Whatever the predictions have been as to the capabilities of the property, the land is clearly not what it has been represented to be by several honourable members. Sir, we have been told by previous speakers that it is a splendid grain-growing country. Now, what is the report of Mr. McMillan? He writes as follows:—

"The roads will be costly to make, and will not carry winter traffic unless thoroughly drained, formed, and metalled, and in many places there will be difficulty in getting shingle, and long distances to cart it. Though the land is of excellent quality, these drawbacks that I have pointed out keep the value down; and I think, with the present low price of grain, and the difficulty of getting it to market, it would pay better to grow turnips, rape, Cape barley, &c., to be fed off the ground with sheep, and thereby confine the produce principally to wool and mutton."

This land is not capable at the present time of producing grain, and therefore is not suitable for close settlement. Another great difficulty,

which has been referred to, is the distance this land is from the market: it is twenty-eight miles by road from the nearest railway-station, and it is something like fifteen or eighteen miles from the Hurunui to the Waiau River, where the best land is. Then, it is forty or fifty miles by rail to Christchurch. These distances must be taken into account as factors in considering the production of grain, especially in view of the low prices now ruling. Another important reason that the land is not suitable for close settlement Mr. Marchant states in his report as follows:—

“The most serious drawback to the establishment of settlement, except the isolation of the estate, is the absence of local building-timber, firewood, or coal. The patches of bush and scrub on the estate are, as a rule, very inaccessible; the bulk of it is in the north-eastern corner, or across the Waiau. Driftwood can be procured on the beach at Gore Bay, and in the Hurunui and Waiau river-beds. No doubt the wants of settlers would soon be satisfied by private enterprise.”

Now, imagine placing a large number of settlers on land like that—wanting timber and fuel, and having to depend entirely on driftwood! I have only to say, in conclusion, that the sum of £260,000 spent on the purchase of Cheviot would have been infinitely better expended, in the first place, in purchasing the unoccupied land in the North Island; and, in the next place, it would have been spent to greater advantage in opening up Crown land. I believe the time will come when large estates will have to give way to close settlement, but that time has not yet arrived. We have now so much waste lands in the colony; and, then, extensive areas of Native land require to be occupied. The energies of every Government ought to be devoted to the settlement of the waste lands. I desire to impress this fact upon the House: that, on the representation of the Minister of Lands, the cost of bridging, roading, and surveying will be £50,000. That means that it will be about £1 an acre—about £60,000 or £70,000—for the former sum is an underestimate. It is well known that the first mile of the main road is to cost £3,000, and that the succeeding few miles will cost £2,000 a mile. If it is true that part of the road is to cost £3,000 a mile, it naturally follows that the land is broken, and cannot be of the quality it has been represented to be by many members. The land must be exceedingly broken to cost as much as that. The Government are going to spend within twelve months or two years upon this estate what they have not spent in roads and bridges during the past three years in the whole of the North Island. That is a statement which cannot be contradicted.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—What do they want bridges for, if there is no water?

Mr. HARKNESS.—The House has been told by the Minister of Lands that a considerable sum will have to be spent on the Hurunui Bridge. As the Bill is going to the Waste Lands Committee, I shall refrain from saying

more at present, as another opportunity of discussing the measure will be afforded.

Mr. JOYCE.—I think the Government is to be congratulated on having purchased this estate: indeed, they were forced to make the purchase. But the Bill which has been brought down by the Government for the disposal of this estate is a great disappointment to me. Under clause 5 I find that one-third of the land is to be sold for cash. Is that the valuable portion, or the second-rate land? According to a plan of the estate which has been distributed to honourable members this afternoon, I find that 31,941 acres are to be opened for selection in October next. Is that land to be sold for cash?—because under this Bill it may be; and, if so, what is to become of those hundreds of people in Canterbury who have been waiting for twelve months, or nearly so, for land at Cheviot? I know what most of my electors will say to me when I go back. They will say, “Why, what a Government you have! We thought it was a Liberal Government.” The Government brought in a Bill last year for the purchase of estates for settlement purposes: £50,000 a year was to be set aside for the purchase of land to be settled upon under perpetual lease; but here I find in this Bill the best of the land in all probability will be sold for cash. In looking up the financial debate, I find that the net proceeds of revenue over expenditure are £346,711, and that sum with the amount brought over from the previous year will make over half a million; and yet under this Bill, without any explanation which I deem sufficient, of this estate—which was supposed to have been purchased first to maintain the revenue of the colony, and afterwards for settlement purposes—I find that one-third of the land is to be sold. For what reason? Is the Government in want of funds? That is what I hope the Minister will explain. The Minister will, I trust, take these remarks kindly, because I am going to vote for the second reading, in the hope that when the Bill comes back from the Waste Lands Committee I shall find considerable alterations made in it; otherwise I shall have to vote against some of the provisions of the Bill. I do not want it to be said to me when I go back that the Cheviot Estate, so far as Canterbury is concerned, is a “white elephant,” and a snare and a delusion to would-be settlers. The Minister knows that large public meetings have been held in Canterbury during the past six or seven weeks, protesting against the action of the Government in selling any of this land. In the face of the Treasurer's Budget, which I hold in my hand, and in which it is stated that we have half a million surplus, why does the Minister suggest that any of this land should be sold? I believe it is not the Minister's desire that any part of this land should be sold. Possibly some influence has been at work, compelling him to resort to the procedure contained in this Bill. At any rate it is a serious matter so far as Canterbury is concerned, because hundreds of families have been waiting anxiously to go upon the land. So much of the land is

to be leased. Is the bad land to be set apart for leasing, and given to these people who have been wanting to settle there, and the best land to be sold so as to get back as much money as possible? These questions trouble me. If the first object which the Government have in view, in connection with this land, is to see how much money they can realise, the whole thing is a snare and a delusion as far as settlement is concerned. I hope the Minister will consider this matter, and that when the Bill goes into Committee we shall have some alterations made in the direction I have suggested.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I think I shall have to come to the rescue of the Minister in connection with this Bill. I am going to support the Bill as brought down by the Minister of Lands. I consider he intends to dispose of this property in a way that at any rate will entail no money being lost to the colony, and I for one will not be a party to the introduction into this measure of provisions for any fancy systems of settlement which may be proposed in this House in order to cripple the hands of the Minister in the proper disposal of this estate. The honourable gentleman who has just spoken will no doubt be replied to by the Minister, and it is not my intention to-night to go into the policy of the purchase of the estate. That has been pretty fully done already. I merely rose for the purpose of congratulating the Minister on, at any rate, endeavouring to settle this property and dispose of it in such a manner that the country will not suffer any loss thereby.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—It seems to me, from the remarks of the honourable member for Akaroa, that there is an earnest desire on the part of the Canterbury people to get this land for nothing, and a number of them appear to have been waiting for some time to accomplish this purpose. Surely we have not arrived at that stage, even if we have a surplus, when we can accommodate the people of Canterbury in that way. Notwithstanding the estimated surplus, I would remind the honourable member for Akaroa and other honourable members that the supplementary estimates have yet to come, and that £250,000 at the very least goes to public works. The surplus itself was reduced down to £380,000 by Ministers themselves, and probably it will be a great deal less than that. The honourable member has been following the Government, and he has really not been attending to the business of the House. Because a few people have been quarrelling down there over this bone, and because a public meeting passed a resolution, which was telegraphed to him, protesting against the land being sold for cash—which meant that these people would be asked to pay for this land—therefore he goes to the Government and implores them not to do what they propose: in fact, the desire is that these people should get the land for nothing. Sir, what is the rest of the colony to do? What is the unfortunate North to do, that has had no money spent on it for the opening-up of its lands? I hope the Minister will not give way

Mr. Joyce

in this matter. I hope he will stand firm. I think, in regard to this matter, that this land has not been badly provided for at all, when we find that £50,000 is to be spent in opening up roads upon it. It is a pity that money is not to be spent in an entirely different direction, and in an entirely different way. I am not going to say one word as to whether the Minister did right in buying the estate. I am glad the property has been acquired; but I say this to the Minister: It is an experiment. It is an experiment that will succeed if members like the honourable member for Akaroa are not allowed to interfere in the matter—if the Government does not take notice of them, and if the Minister—and in this way alone it will succeed—manages it in a businesslike manner. In that case he and the colony will find it will succeed. But if he allows denominations from the different towns, or large public meetings, to instruct him what is to be done with it, he will find that it will lead to nothing but trouble, and the colony will find that it will be the last block of land that will be bought by the Government for many years. I should like to see this experiment become a success, but I do not see how it is to become a success if we listen to one part of the colony—Canterbury—which is crying out to have all the money spent upon it, and growling because we are not spending this £260,000 for their special benefit, and because the other £50,000 is not to be spent in Canterbury too. What for? So that the people there may get this land for nothing. Their whole trouble is to get the land for nothing. I do hope the Minister, in cutting up this block, will see that suitable people get it, or will see that it is sold in suitable blocks—that he will look after the financial part of the affair and make it a financial success, notwithstanding ten thousand meetings, and despite all such members as the honourable member for Akaroa.

Mr. MCGUIRE.—I desire to offer a few remarks upon the policy of the Government in this matter, and I regret to be compelled to tell the Minister of Lands—who appears to take a delight in interrupting me—and other honourable members that, whether we get into Supply upon the estimates this evening or not, I shall have my "say" on this question.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. MCGUIRE.—Sir, the more interruptions I receive the longer I shall speak, although I had only intended to say a few words. I wish I could congratulate the Government on having acquired this estate. Nothing would have given me more pleasure. Possibly it is in the best interest of the country. We have spent £260,000 in the purchase of this land—land which was paying rates and taxes. Again, this land was carrying as much as it ever will carry to the acre.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—No.

Mr. MCGUIRE.—The honourable gentleman says "No"; but that honourable gentleman wants the Government to plough it, and to drain it, and to put sheep on it, and to go in

for all kinds of experiments. I had a better opinion of the honourable member for Selwyn. I always looked upon him as a practical man, possessed of good common-sense; but I have now discovered that I was labouring under a delusion with respect to the honourable gentleman, who is prepared to go into all kinds of fads. I will pass the honourable gentleman. Sir, in my opinion, this £260,000 has not been profitably spent. Here was a property contributing a large share of taxation, adding to the bulk of our exports, and yielding a certain amount to our revenue; and, seeing that there were elsewhere in the colony millions of acres of land that are yielding nothing in the form of taxation,—contributing nothing to our exports, and producing no revenue,—I say the Government were wrong altogether in purchasing this estate, and they will find that out for themselves; but in the meantime a great wrong will have been done to the colony, and any loss made will have to be borne by the people, who are already the most heavily taxed people in the world, in many cases from blunders made by past Administrations. Then, again, we see that £50,000 is estimated to be expended in opening up the estate by roads and other things; and when I look at clause 18 of the Bill I find that the Minister is going in for systematic road-making and bridging, and so forth. Now, why does not the honourable gentleman do that with the special settlers in this Island, who have neither ingress nor egress from their holdings, who are placed in the wilderness and are not able to get supplies to their places? But here, in this favoured District of Canterbury, every provision is made. Clause 18 says,—

“The Minister may from time to time lay off, construct, and maintain all such public roads, streets, bridges, culverts, drains, fences, and other works as may be necessary to afford access to the Cheviot Estate or any part thereof.”

Why is this estate to be treated in this exceptional manner, when other parts of New Zealand are left in a state of nature? No doubt the Government will be able to give an answer. I trust it will be a satisfactory one. Large sums of money are to be expended on this estate. We have in my part of the country a large number of settlers—some of them from Canterbury—many times more numerically than the Minister can put on the Cheviot Estate, and yet these northern settlers can get no consideration. The other day a deputation pointed out to the Minister the unfortunate state of the district in question, and mentioned that some of the special settlers were leaving on account of the absence of roads; and what did the Minister do? He simply acted in the most unbecoming manner, when he was told that some of the special settlers were leaving, and others about to leave, and that the settlements were only paper settlements; and the reason was, that they had no opportunity afforded them for going on the land. Surely that is not in the interests of the country.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—You mean, it is not in your interest?

Mr. McGUIRE.—The honourable gentleman says it is not in my interest. As far as I am concerned, it is only in the interests of the people whom I represent that I speak, and in the best interests of the colony. Were the honourable gentleman carrying out what I believe he ought to do in the way of furthering settlement, he would pay more attention to the making of roads for the purpose of enabling people to get upon the land, and I believe he would thus be doing far more good for the colony than he can achieve by purchasing large estates like the Cheviot. This is my opinion. I am surely entitled to give my opinion, and it should not have the effect of irritating the Minister. Whether it has that effect or not, I will not hesitate to state what I believe to be the truth in order to pander to any person, not even a Minister of the Crown. Personally I should be pleased to be able to agree with the Minister of Lands. And I would further add, for the information of this House and of the Government, that all these settlements will fail unless something is done for their permanent good in the shape of roads and bridges. Now, with respect to the purchase of Native land, the House will see that under the Native Land Purchases Act £50,000 was to be expended annually on the purchase of Native land. Now, how much do honourable gentlemen think has been expended?—About one-third of that amount. I will, however, refrain from saying any more on this subject at present,—although it is a very important question,—trusting that the Government will see their way to give relief in the direction indicated to the *bonâ fide* settlers.

An Hon. MEMBER.—£20,000.

Mr. McGUIRE.—There has not been £20,000 in cash paid, as can be seen by turning to “The Land Purchases Act, 1892.” Account for the year ending on the 31st March, 1893. Purchase of Native lands: By cash, £11,875 2s. 10d.; by debentures, £7,700: total, £19,575 2s. 10d. This is the correct amount, if we are to believe the Budget. Will the honourable gentleman who interrupted me dispute these figures? And the price given has been from 2s. to 3s. 3d. per acre, with the exception of 8 acres 1 rood 13 perches which cost 10s. per acre. I again ask the House, would it not be in the true interest of the country to purchase Native land at the price stated? Yet no attempt is made to acquire it. I am perfectly certain that one hundred acres of it will carry as large a family as will one hundred acres of the Cheviot Estate. And then, again, there is £50,000 to be spent on the acquisition of estates near the towns in the North Island and South Island. How much of that land has been acquired? I think about one thousand acres altogether have been purchased in that direction, while at the same time we have spent £260,000 on the acquisition of this Cheviot Estate. I assure you, Sir, that when I speak about the urgent necessity for roads and bridges in the North Island I

speak in the true interests of the people of this colony.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—You mean that you are speaking in your own interest.

Mr. McGUIRE.—That may be your opinion, and it is not a charitable one. Such opinions generally arise from a corrupt heart; and you will find that it is not my opinion alone but the opinion of the struggling settlers, whose sufferings make my heart bleed. I can tell you that there is great dissatisfaction in every direction in consequence of the way in which these unfortunate people have been treated. Many of them have to abandon their holdings because they cannot get supplies. Yet you are spending money in all directions! I had hoped that everything possible would be done to assist the small settlers to make homes for themselves; but I regret to say I have been disappointed. We have millions of acres of land in this Island which carry nothing but the standing bush. And what has been done for the settlement of the settlers? Very little. I hope that the Cheviot Estate will turn out well; but I consider it is my duty to tell the Government and this House that the moneys expended in the purchase of the Cheviot Estate—namely, £260,000, together with £50,000 for surveys, *et cetera*—would have been more beneficially expended in purchasing Native lands and opening up Crown lands, and giving the settlers facilities in the shape of roads and bridges. But this would not suit the Minister of Lands nor his constituents in the South. I am glad that one-third of the land is to be sold for cash, because that is absolutely necessary in the financial interests of the country; and, with reference to the eternal lease, I think it is a great pity the land is not sold on the old perpetual-lease and deferred-payment systems, which would afford far more encouragement to the settlers. I know hundreds of men who would work their hands off if they thought they could eventually succeed in making their land freehold. I am certainly pleased to see that the Minister of Lands has departed to a certain extent from the lines laid down in 1892, because I think it is in the real interests of the country that there is no compulsory clause in the settlement of this estate. There are many innovations here which are not at all in accordance with the Land Act of 1892. I believe they are in the right direction, and I congratulate the Minister upon the new departure. I have only one more word to say—namely, that tenders should be called for forthwith for all road-work, in order to take advantage of any favourable weather we may have in the future. This is very important, and I trust it will not be neglected.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The honourable member who has just sat down could not possibly have shown more clearly the feeling that he holds towards the Minister of Lands, simply because the Minister of Lands would not road his district in a superior way to that in which any other part of the colony is treated. The honourable gentleman has made the statement

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to-night that we have neglected the roads in his district. The honourable gentleman knew when he was making that statement that it could not be borne out by the facts, because last year I spent more money in his electorate than I did in any other electorate in the Colony of New Zealand. Sir, the honourable gentleman told me the other day that he wanted a large sum of money spent on roads in his district. He is himself personally interested in a block of land in that district, and because he could not get his own way in the matter he comes here and abuses the Minister of Lands. The whole of this money—

Mr. McGUIRE.—What the honourable gentleman is stating is not in accordance with facts.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Order.

Mr. McGUIRE.—The Speaker will call me to order if I should happen to be out of order.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Does the honourable gentleman mean to say that he has no interest in any block of land in his part of the country?

Mr. McGUIRE.—No, certainly not.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—How long is it since you disposed of it? I know better than the honourable gentleman imagines. Then, the honourable gentleman finds fault because we are not purchasing a sufficient amount of Native land in the North Island. I say, again, that he has an interest in a block of land which has a block of Native land in front of it, and that he or some of his friends are very anxious to have that block purchased so as to have roads made through that land, so as to increase the value of their own property.

Mr. McGUIRE.—What the honourable gentleman has stated is quite untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Order. The honourable member cannot be allowed to make such a remark.

Mr. McGUIRE.—I mean, Sir, that what the honourable gentleman has stated is not in accordance with facts.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I know what I am saying, and it will be borne out by people who know more about the subject than I do. The honourable gentleman spoke in such a way that I think the Colony of New Zealand should know something of what has been done in his district in the way of road-making. A large number of honourable members who spoke on this Bill to-night could not possibly have been present when I moved the second reading, for if they had been present then they would have known that I explained the whole matter in connection with the purchase of the Cheviot Estate in such a way that they could not possibly have made the statements they have been making to-night. The honourable member for Nelson City, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), and the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) are all absent at present, but they were present to-night; and yet they were not present, as far as I know, when I moved the second reading of the Bill, but they afterwards came in and made speeches somewhat on the lines of the speeches they made on the Financial

Statement. I was very much surprised at the tone of the honourable member for Akaroa on the subject of this Bill. It appears to me, Sir, as if the Canterbury members, or some of them—I do not mean to say all of them, but, at any rate, a few of them—think that a portion of the surplus for the last twelve months should be devoted to Canterbury alone, and that this Cheviot Estate should be purchased out of the surplus, and handed over to the people in leases, without getting anything in return. Then, we find honourable members in the North Island saying the money used in buying the Cheviot Estate, £262,000, ought to have been spent on roads in the North Island. The position of the Government in connection with the purchase was this: that the purchase, as I explained in introducing the Bill, was forced on the Government. Honourable members have mixed up the Land for Settlements Act, the Land and Income Assessment Act, and the Land Act in the most extraordinary manner in connection with the Cheviot Estate. Honourable members say the Government purchased this estate. Of course we did, when we were forced to do so; but we did not go to the trustees and ask them to sell it to us. They came to us and said, "According to the law of the land you have fixed the value of the land at so much; we consider that too high: then, according to the law, we demand that you take it at our own valuation." That is the exact position. What did the Government do? As I explained the matter to-day, we got all sorts of valuations made to see whether the value of our assessors was correct, and we were assured of it; and, that being the case, we had to say either one thing or the other—we had to say whether we would make a reduction on the assessment, or whether we would purchase the estate. Well, had we decided to reduce the assessment, what would that mean? It would mean that every large landowner in the colony would have an equal right to have his valuation reduced; and honourable members say that would be a very small thing! I say, if we agreed to an arrangement of this sort, and reduced the value of the estate by £44,000, we should have this House this year besieged with petitions from large landowners asking to receive justice in the same way. And what could the House say had the Government been so weak as to reduce the valuation? They would say, "You have done it in this case; you have not upheld the position of your own valuers; and you must do the same with the other applicants." Then, it is asked, "Why was this estate bought? Why were not others?" This was the only estate in the colony which was offered to us.

Mr. RHODES.—No.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—It is the only estate under the Land and Income Assessment Act that was offered to us.

Mr. RHODES.—It is not.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I say it is the only estate offered to us when our assessors upheld the valuation. And, Sir, we have the honour-

able member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) to-night asking why did we not take the Woburn Estate. Let me tell the House what was the position of this matter. Russell's Woburn Estate was valued by the Board of Reviewers at £4 17s. 6d. an acre, improved value. The Commissioner of Taxes raised the value to £5 7s. 6d. an acre, and called on the owner's agents to agree to this value, or if they did not he would recommend that the estate should be purchased at the amount at which it was returned by the owner—£4—with 10 per cent. added. The owner's agents again appealed to the Board of Reviewers, and the Board reduced the value to £4 17s. 6d., at which it remains assessed. That was the position of that estate; and yet here we are told that we ought to have taken it, as it was offered to us! Honourable members talk about subjects—some of them, at any rate—with which they are not acquainted; and it would be far better if they would leave them alone than to make misstatements of this sort. The honourable member for Nelson City, I think, acted very unfairly in the manner in which he quoted from the report of Mr. Marchant, Commissioner of Crown Lands in Canterbury. Mr. Marchant, in sending in his report to the Government, discussed the question of the purchase of the Cheviot Estate from all points of view; and the honourable gentleman did not read the whole report, but only such portions as suited his own purpose, to show that the purchase was a bad one. The honourable gentleman must know that the valuation put on this property by Mr. Marchant was within £4,000 of the assessor's; and, if his opinion of the estate was as bad as the honourable gentleman wishes us to believe it was, then the two things are not consistent. Then, honourable gentlemen say we ought to have taken all we wanted for settlement, and to have disposed of the remainder through the Land-tax Department. Now, we want every acre of this land for settlement; and I venture to say that those honourable gentlemen who have been so busy to-night prophesying all sorts of disasters will find they will not come out right. I am as certain as that I am standing here that for every acre we have to sell at Cheviot we shall have four or five applicants, and we shall not have enough land for settlement for the number of people who will want it. Now let us come to the question of its being far better, as several honourable members have said, that the whole of the money should be spent in purchasing and roading land in the North Island. I am sure honourable gentlemen who look carefully into the matter will admit that I have done a considerable amount of roading, and opening up, and settling land in the North Island. But is it to be said that it is only the North Island that is to progress in the way of settlement? Has not the South Island an equal right to say that there should be land for settlement in the South Island? And let me say we should have lost many good settlers in the South Island if we had not got such property as the

Cheviot Estate to settle them on—farmers' sons, brought up in the South Island to plough, who do not know anything about bush-farming or the system of farming in the North Island, and as a consequence do not like to face it; who would not come to the North Island whether we wished it or not, and, consequently, if we had not property of this sort to dispose of, would very likely leave the colony. I may say here that I have at the present time in the Lands Department a large number of letters from people in Tasmania, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, all making inquiries about the Cheviot Estate; and I have not the slightest doubt that the result will be, when the land is open, there will be a tremendous rush for it, and a great deal of good will be done thereby. Then, with regard to what has been said about roading in the North Island: We have during the year spent \$117,000 on roads throughout the colony, the greater part being spent in the North Island. And yet we are told we are doing nothing in the North Island. Are we going continually to "milk" the South Island for the purpose of roading the North? We must do something for the South as well; and I object entirely to the continual statement that this money would be better spent in the North Island. Then, we have it stated as something extraordinary that we are spending \$50,000 in roading and surveying. Every sixpence of that money will be added to the value of the estate itself, and the amount we shall receive will pay for the roading and surveys as well as the value of the land.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You will not get your money back.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I am not at all afraid about our getting the money back. I see my honourable friend the member for Ellesmere shaking his head, but I think he knows enough about the estate to know that we shall get our money back all right. Then, we have the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) telling the House that we shall not get 4 per cent. on the money spent for the estate. I stated here that we are getting at present 3½ per cent. on the purchase-money on short leases; and I ask any honourable member who knows anything about the tenure of land if it is not reasonable to suppose that for a longer tenure we shall get better rent. Is it to be supposed a man will give as much rent for a six months' lease as he will if you give him a twenty years' lease? There is no comparison at all, and the result will be that, as we are getting 3½ per cent. now, we can surely calculate on getting a great deal more when the property is disposed of on long leases to good tenants. I have no hesitation in saying that we shall get 5 per cent. on our money, including in the capital the roading and surveying too, and there will be no loss whatever to the colony. I am afraid that to go over all the statements made to-night by honourable gentlemen who seem to know nothing about the estate would be absurd on my part. I noticed the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) made some

statement in connection with the estate. And it appears to me that whenever the honourable gentleman speaks on the land question he is entirely at sea, as I notice on different occasions when addressing his constituency here: I read his speeches in the paper, and I find he has always been very far astray on the land question.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—How can the honourable gentleman be at sea on the land question?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The phrase, as I use it, means wide of the mark, and the honourable gentleman is always wide of the mark when he talks on the land question, and I sincerely advise him never to touch it again until he reads the Land Act, because he really does not know the Acts he is a party to passing. The honourable member tells us that the Cheviot Estate only carried one and a quarter sheep to the acre, and that its producing-power is as great now as ever it will be. I venture to say that within the next five years the producing-power of the estate will have increased fourfold if not fivefold. I venture to say that without fear, when the time comes, of being found wrong in my opinion. The honourable member for Wairarapa shakes his head. Well, he always looks very wise when he does that, and we all know he is a man of general intelligence, and knows very well what the value of land is. I should like to ask him how much produce was taken off his estate when he went on it at first. Very little; and he has made it carry a great deal more stock than when he went on it; and the same result will be found at Cheviot.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—It was covered with bush.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I remember when I came to New Zealand, thirty-three years ago, coming to the place I reside at now: there were then twenty thousand sheep in the whole of the Shag Valley, and I recollect a gentleman assuring me that it could never carry any more, do what you like. At the present time it must carry at the very least two hundred thousand, and it yields any amount of dairy produce and grain of every description. I venture to say that I know something about land, and I have not the slightest fear of saying that the estate can be made to carry four times the stock on it which the trustees sold. So this does not show that the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) knows very much about land, at any rate. Then, the honourable gentleman had a "dig" at sly borrowing. That is one of his pet subjects—sly borrowing. He says we went in for sly borrowing in making this purchase. The Colonial Treasurer will be able to tell him all about that when the proper time comes and he asks the House for authority for the money. Then, we were told by the honourable member for Rangitikei that the trustees made a splendid bargain in disposing of the estate to the Government. Well, I am not very sure of that: at any rate, one of the trustees acknowledged to me that they knew when they were selling that they were losing £30,000; but, owing to the fact that the trustees could not agree amongst

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themselves, they had to dispose of the estate in order to divide the trusts. And what was the result? The House knows we have had a Bill before us, which has passed through, dividing the large estate into five different trusts, simply because the trustees could not agree amongst themselves. So long as they had the estate in acres they could not divide it, but the moment they got it turned into sovereigns there was no difficulty in the matter, because they could easily divide it. And that is the reason why the colony got the Cheviot Estate.

Mr. HARKNESS.—They did not get the sovereigns.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—They got the sovereigns; there is no doubt about that. I signed a cheque for it, and I ought to know something about it. The estate was paid for. The honourable gentleman will not believe that, but it is so. Well, then, so much for the grand sale the trustees made. They themselves acknowledged it, and every one who knows the true history of the matter knows that the trustees were very anxious to get rid of the estate, because they could not subdivide it, and that was the real reason why the Government got it at all. Now I come to the very amusing speech made by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish). That honourable member twits me about changing my opinions with regard to the disposal of Crown lands from this time last year. One would imagine from the speech made by the honourable gentleman to-night that there was no right of purchase in the Land Act of last year at all, and that all land was to be leased in perpetuity, and nothing else. That shows that the honourable member for Dunedin City, whatever he may know about some subjects, whenever he comes to talk on land business, and subjects connected with land, knows very little of the subjects he is talking about. If he will only read section 138 of the Land Act of last year he will find there the optional system, under which land can be purchased for cash, or selected for occupation with right of purchase, or on lease in perpetuity. So that any one going into a land office in any part of the colony can become a freeholder right off, or can lease the land and come in and purchase the land at some future time. That is the law at the present time: but one would imagine from what the honourable gentleman said that I had changed my views from those I held last year. The honourable gentleman said he was in favour of perpetual lease, and that no more land should be sold, and he says that if the honourable member for Inangahua brings down a resolution to that effect he will find him supporting it. Some twenty years ago I stood on the floor of the Provincial Council of Otago and supported a resolution, brought forward by the honourable member for Inangahua, that no more land should be sold in Otago. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) was also a member of the Provincial Council, and he was in the opposite lobby to myself and the honourable member for Inangahua, and if there is any

conversion on this subject it is the conversion of the honourable member for Dunedin City, and not of myself, because I have always held the same views as I did at that time; but I always found it was impossible to give effect to them,—the same as the honourable member for Inangahua. Twenty years ago he was of opinion that no more land should be sold; since then he has been Minister of Lands, and he has also been Prime Minister, but he has not been able to carry out the measure. I do not see why I should be accused for not being able to carry out mine either. The speech of the honourable member for Dunedin City went to show that he knows very little indeed about the subject he was talking of. We know that his capacity for talk is enormous, and that he has only to open his mouth and something will roll out. On this occasion he has opened his mouth and talked about the Bill in the most absurd manner, because he has mixed the Land Assessment Act and the Land for Settlements Act and the Land Act together, and really did not know what he was talking about. He went on to say that if the Government had reduced the Cheviot Estate valuation by £44,000 there would have been only a loss to the colony of 44,000 pence; but, as I have already explained, we should lose not only that but also the graduation-tax, and not only should we lose taxation on this estate by accepting a lower valuation, but we should be bound to make equal reductions in other estates. We should have it said to us in regard to other estates, "Well, if you have made that reduction in Cheviot, we shall certainly demand reductions to be made as to our estates," and no doubt that would have been done in many cases. Then, we heard a great deal about this £3,000 which this property would pay in the shape of taxes. Can honourable members think for a moment that the £262,000 paid for the Cheviot Estate has left New Zealand? We know very well it has not, and that this money will yield a certain amount of income-tax to the colony. Money may be taken away, of course, but the land is still there. Does the honourable gentleman imagine for one moment that Cheviot will not pay any taxes when it is settled upon?

Sir J. HALL.—It will not pay graduated tax.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—It will still pay taxation; it will pay Customs revenue and land-tax. That is no argument at all in connection with the matter that this £3,000 is lost to the colony. It is not lost, and I venture to say that the people who got this money will find no better colony to invest it in than New Zealand. It is not likely they will send it to Australia or to any of the American States at the present moment, when there are so many of them in a state of bankruptcy, and I am sure that they would get nothing like the same interest as they will get here. I think they are at least as safe in New Zealand, and I do not think there is much chance of that money leaving the colony. Now I come to a few remarks made by the honourable member for Maitauro, who was the first to address the House on this subject; and I may say that he, at any rate,

spoke on the subject from some knowledge of what he was talking about. Although I do not agree with all his conclusions, still I think, on the whole, he was very fair with regard to the Bill. One thing I did not agree with him in was that this land was in good occupation. No doubt it was, but not so good as it will be by-and-by. More will be taken out of it than was done by the late owners. Then the honourable gentleman went on to say that it would be better if the Government looked at this question entirely as a question of throwing open land for settlement, and that it would be far better to buy waste land in the North Island. As I have said before, in the Cheviot Estate we have the means by which the estate will pay for itself. We are not going to spend a large sum of money that will not yield an immediate return. In the North Island, do whatever you will, you have to wait for a long time before you get any return for your money; but, as to the Cheviot Estate, we are getting 3½ per cent. interest on our money already, and as soon as we put the land in the market on a good tenure we shall be able to get good interest on our money; and at the same time we are providing land for settlement for the people of Canterbury. The honourable gentleman went on to say he was astonished at my action in this matter, seeing that at one time, while sitting on these benches, I stated I would sooner leave these benches than allow any land to be sold. I do not recollect ever making that statement. I said that if this House took the Land Bill out of my hands, sooner than allow that to be done, and the Land Bill to be mauled about as some members of this House wished it to be, I would leave these benches. I did not say that in connection with the freehold. In fact, I told this House time after time that the time was coming when a Crown grant would not be known: but the time has not yet come. I mentioned fifty years. Well, I am prepared to say that again. The time will come when there will be no Crown grant in this colony. I regret I am too old now to live to see that, but that day will come. Now, coming down to this matter of disposing of a portion of this estate for cash, as I said to-day it is absolutely necessary to do so. We cannot afford to get the whole of this money from any other source, and it is necessary the State should pay something for it. Then, it is said we are not going to give the settlers the "thirds" of the money they pay for the land. If we make the roads and bridges, and put these in good order, there will be no necessity for giving them the thirds. When I asked the House to agree to the passing of the Cheviot County Bill I explained that my object was that the people in that county should take charge of the roads themselves. This clause in the Bill, which was found fault with by the honourable member for Egmont, that the colony was to road the land and look after the bridges, is only to provide for that being done until such time as the colony disposes of the estate, and then the local body will be called upon to rate

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the district for the purpose of keeping up the roads. Then, the honourable member for Wairarapa remarked that he had very grave doubts as to our being able to make this a financial success, and he quoted the fact that owners of private estates in the South had not generally disposed of them with financial success. We know very well that some large land companies did break up their estates and try to sell them; but what were the prices they asked? £10, £14, £18, and £20 an acre. They tried to sell them at a price which settlers could not possibly afford to give and pay interest and make a living. That was the reason these large estates were not a financial success. We wish to sell at a price which will enable the settlers to live and do good for themselves. That is a different thing altogether. Then, we are told that wheat would not grow in Cheviot, and some honourable gentleman stated that last year there was only a return of six bushels to the acre,—that one of the people on the estate told him that was the return. I went over the land when the wheat was in stook, and, of all the farming that I ever saw, that was the worst. I declare to honourable gentlemen that, on that land on the Cheviot Estate, that table in front of me would have made about two furrows of the class of cultivation I saw; and if the honourable member for Wairarapa would tell me that he would grow wheat with such cultivation as that—

Mr. BUCHANAN.—One of the finest crops of wheat I ever saw was on a 16in. furrow.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—There must have been special circumstances.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—That was in Canterbury.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman, I am sure, would not sow wheat in land of his own with furrows of that sort. I was astonished, when I saw the sort of cultivation there was at Cheviot, that any wheat would grow at all there, considering the wet season. When I went through the paddocks and saw the grass laid down in the way it was done, it seemed to me to be the most slovenly farming I had seen in New Zealand. Such farming as that could not be a success anywhere. That is the way in which a place gets a bad name. No one knows that better than the honourable member for Wairarapa himself, because I believe that, whatever views he may hold in politics, as an owner and manager of an estate he is "up to the knocker." I have a few notes here, Sir, of what was said by my honourable friend the leader of the Opposition, but I do not think there is anything that I need reply to. He took a very kindly view of this Bill, and hoped the whole thing would be a success, and he was prepared to give me assistance to make it a success. Whatever doubts he may have on that score at present, I am quite sure that when we meet here again next year he will acknowledge that the purchase has been a success. Then, the honourable member for the Hutt said something about this Cheviot Estate. I do not know what he knows about it, except from what he has picked up in some of the newspapers he has

been reading. He has made a most extraordinary blunder in the matter. He could not see where we were making provision for this \$260,000. I am sure he could not have been in the House during my remarks while moving the second reading of the Bill, because I then said that the Colonial Treasurer would bring down a separate Bill for that purpose. Then, the honourable member said he would put aside a certain amount of sinking fund for the purpose of wiping off this amount. Well, Sir, let me know this: Would it be fair to ask settlers purchasing land at Cheviot to provide the first interest on the capital value of the land, and afterwards to provide the sinking fund—that is, if it is to be on perpetual lease, with a revaluation in twenty or thirty years?—because it stands to reason that the value will be increased in that time. If, on the other hand, the proposition were to sell to these people at a certain interest each year, which would eventually pay off the whole interest on the estate, the proposal might be worth considering; otherwise it would not be fair. However, I think I have said quite sufficient on this matter.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the railway?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I am glad my honourable friend has reminded me of the railway. The Government, when fixing up the manner in which the land was to be disposed of, thought the proper thing was to survey a railway-line, in the event of a railway having to go through at some future day. Honourable members will understand that if a railway were made it would go through paddocks, farms, and gardens of all sorts, and a large amount of compensation would have to be paid to the owners of these when the lands were taken. So that in the meantime we have taken the precaution to have the line properly marked out on the maps. As I explained, this map is only a preliminary one, and the Government will see that no promise is made that a railway shall be constructed at any time, so that no person buying land will at any future time have any claim upon the Government on the score of unfulfilled promises of this sort. I think that will meet that objection. Well, then, my honourable friend the member for Selwyn thought that the Government did not go far enough, because we did not buy the sheep. Well, I considered this subject, and I must say that I was very strongly against purchasing the sheep. I should have been quite willing to buy the sheep on the land at a valuation, but when I found that the trustees were determined to sell all the stock by public auction I knew that if the Government wanted to purchase the whole of those sheep on the estate they would have to pay very high prices. I went to the estate and saw the sheep myself, and put my own value upon them, and I found the price they sold at was from 1s. 6d. to 8s. per head above my valuation; and I am quite certain that some of the sheep sold at Cheviot in April last would not now fetch the money they fetched at that time. If the Government had pur-

chased the sheep we should have lost money by it, because the prices were very high at that time. It was therefore taking a wise precaution not to have anything to do with the sheep. At any rate, I took upon myself the responsibility, to a great extent, of having nothing to do with the sheep. Of course, if we were buying the sheep we should have had to take the estate for twelve months, and if sheep had gone up in price the Government might have made a big profit, but if they had gone down there would have been a loss. I do not think it would have been a good speculation for the colony. Then, some honourable members drew my attention to the fact that no provision was made with regard to settlement upon the estate. They must have misread the Bill, because if they had read the Bill in connection with the Land Act they would have found that there is provision already in the Land Act of last year that any one taking up a section on lease in perpetuity must carry out the provisions of the Land Act so far as settlement is concerned. I have, I think, answered all those arguments that were of any value. I now see the honourable member for Dunedin City in his place, and I will ask him to read section 138 of the Land Act of last session, where he will find that any one taking up Crown land in the colony can go to the land office and choose what sort of tenure he will take it up on—whether for cash, lease in perpetuity, or lease with the right of purchase—so that the honourable gentleman is entirely wrong.

Mr. FISH.—Were not the terms of the Act of last year different from those of the previous Acts?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—If the honourable gentleman will look up the Act he will find in section 138 that any one can go into the land office and choose his own tenure.

Mr. FISH.—Will the honourable gentleman permit me to say that the conditions now are entirely different? A purchase is now saddled with certain conditions, and there are no conditions in this Bill.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman is totally wrong again. The honourable gentleman has a certain amount of common-sense; and if he will read the Bill properly, and read the settlement clause with the Land Act, he will see that settlement is provided for. Now I think I have answered all the remarks that have been made. I hope the second reading of the Bill will now be carried. When the Bill comes back from Committee all those honourable gentlemen who found fault with it will have an opportunity of discussing it again. I hope the leader of the Opposition will carry out his promise to assist me to get the Bill made a useful and good measure, in the interests of the colony.

Bill read a second time.

NORTH OF AUCKLAND ROADS.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. PALMER said he must take this opportunity of ventilating a grievance which they had in the North of Auckland, and, in order to do that, he would move the following amendment: That the Government should take over the maintenance of the road from Auckland to the north. This would run through the three counties situated in that part of the colony. Some honourable gentlemen might be inclined to disagree with it because it did not affect their districts, but he could assure them that it was a very necessary work. They had been spending a quarter of a million on the purchase of the Cheviot Estate, while these settlers in the North were complaining that they could not get any roads made there; what few roads there were were cut up by the gum traffic, and they got nothing from the Government to maintain these roads. They did not even get the thirds from land-sales, which were given to the local bodies in the South. How was it possible, then, for these counties in the North to do the work which they were supposed to do—namely, to keep open these roads? These counties were absolutely doing the work of the Government there, and were finding employment for the unemployed, while there was also employment found on the gumfields, and thus the Government were relieved of a great deal of responsibility. There was not one single railway passing through the district, and yet that district had to pay its share, and had for years been paying its share, of the sixteen millions of money that had been expended on the railways, while it got nothing in return for that. They had not even got a metalled road up there, whereas down South wherever you went you would see a metalled road alongside the railway. The roads up in that part ran chiefly through Crown lands, and these roads were being cut up more every day, so that the Crown lands were becoming very much depreciated. If there were good roads there, properly maintained; there was plenty of good land in the district that could be settled. The land in that part of the colony had not got its fair share of expenditure in the past, and he thought the Minister of Lands admitted that himself when last he visited that part of the colony. He hoped the Government would see their way to accept the amendment, and take over these roads. After what had occurred that afternoon, and the assistance that had been given to the promotion of settlement in the South, he trusted the same assistance would be given to the people in the North.

Mr. TAYLOR seconded the amendment with the greatest pleasure, because he recognised this fact: that if they were going to open up the north of the colony they must have roads and bridges, and any surplus arising from the taxation of the colony ought to be spent in that direction. Some people might say that down in the South everything was provided for them, but he did not think his honourable friend the member for Ellesmere would say so. They were not provided for as they ought to be. He was prepared to say this: that, seeing the vast interests which existed in the Provincial Dis-

trict of Canterbury, not only from a frozen-meat point of view—and that was one of the first points of view so far as the interests of the colony were concerned—but in other respects, there ought to be more assistance given for the development of the natural industries of the colony than was now given. He thought the honourable gentleman who moved this amendment had done good service to the part of the country from which he came. They were all desirous not only of settling the land in the North, but also in the South. He himself seriously believed that if the Government could bring in a Bill dealing with the Native lands, and taking possession of them, and preventing all the waste there was in legal expenditure in connection with these lands, they would be conferring a great benefit not only on the people of the colony but on the Natives themselves. To show what he meant, he might mention that Mr. Reid, a lawyer, had sent him a pamphlet in which he gave an illustration of the manner in which the Native lands were dealt with. There was one case in which the Natives sold 50,000 acres of land at 10s. an acre; and, as this gentleman said, the Natives naturally expected that they would get something like £25,000; but what was the result? Why, this learned gentleman said that the law-costs and other charges took £18,000 out of the £25,000 before the Natives got one penny. He would ask, would it not be in the interest of the Natives that they should deal directly with the Government, rather than that they should have the money taken in this way?

Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that the honourable gentleman must address himself to the question of the roads in the North of Auckland.

Mr. TAYLOR would then only repeat that he seconded the amendment with great pleasure.

Mr. R. THOMPSON was rather sorry that the honourable member for Waitemata had not intimated to the Auckland members that he was going to move this amendment. He wanted to thank the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor) for seconding the amendment. The honourable gentleman was always ready to assist the poor and needy, and in this case he was certainly doing good service by seconding this amendment. The district in the North of Auckland, as was well known to all honourable members, had neither roads nor railways: in fact, it was a roadless district. It was a long, narrow strip of country, and most of the supplies were conveyed there by coasting steamers, and the roads were in such a condition inland that during the winter season traffic was almost suspended. Unfortunately for that portion of the colony, during the borrowing régime of the colony that part was neglected entirely. Very little borrowed money had ever been expended there, and on the last occasion on which a vote was put on the estimates for roads in the North of Auckland a large portion of that vote was diverted to Onehunga. On every occasion there had been an oppor-

tunity of doing something for that part of the colony the money had been diverted into some other channel. The question of maintaining the roads there had been brought before the House on several occasions. It had been brought forward year after year by the local bodies, and numerous petitions had been sent to the House asking that something should be done. Of course, he was aware that all Governments had a difficulty in taking over main roads, for this reason: that probably other parts of the colony would ask for the same privilege. Still, this part of the colony was not in the same position as other parts, and whether the Government would decide to make these colonial roads or put a special vote on the estimates for them, he was not prepared to say, but there was no doubt that if the Government wished that portion of the colony to progress and keep pace with other parts some provision would have to be made for the maintenance of the roads there, otherwise inland communication would entirely cease. The unfortunate position of that part of the colony was this: that the roads were cut up by the gum traffic, and the heaviest portion of that traffic was in the winter season. He ventured to say that if any honourable member visited that part of the colony now he would find the main roads impassable for horse traffic, to say nothing of vehicle traffic. A short time ago the Dairy Inspector was sent up from Wellington to address the settlers there, and give them some information with regard to establishing dairy factories, but he found the roads in such a condition that he had to return, and could not go inland to the scattered settlements. It had recently been suggested by the settlers up there that the Government should bring in a Bill this session handing over the whole of the gumfields to the County Councils, in order to assist them in making and maintaining the roads. He did not know whether the Government had yet received the report of the Gumfields Commission, but he trusted that as soon as that report reached their hands they would make some provision for these roads. He had no doubt the Commissioners would make some reference to the roads. Then, they had the timber traffic, which, he might say, was a new thing as far as the roads were concerned. The forests disposed of previously were situated on the banks of rivers, and the timber was removed by floating; but now the whole of the timber had to be dragged over the roads, and the result was that this timber traffic had cut up the roads very much. It was a very serious matter for the settlers there, and, seeing that the House was going to authorise the Government to expend £50,000 in roading one small estate of eighty thousand acres in Canterbury, to give access to sections for some 114 settlers, he thought the Government should make some endeavour to keep the roads in the North open for traffic. Again, he would point out the difficulty in which the settlers in the North were placed, because large areas of the best land in the district belonged to the Natives,

who contributed nothing in the way of local taxation. The settlers had never had any assistance from the lands purchased by the Crown, but they had to carry the roads through large areas of Native country. From these lands they got no assistance. There was a Bill now on the Order Paper proposing to deal with these lands and to bring them under local taxation. He hoped that the Bill would become law. The Government would see the absolute necessity of making some special provision to meet the case. Unless some steps were taken to maintain the roads, the whole of the settlers and young men would leave the district and seek homes in other parts of the colony or in Australia. They were becoming discouraged, and unless some provision were made to assist them the whole system of local government in that part of the colony must fall to pieces. He trusted that when the Public Works Statement came down they would find very liberal provision made for that portion of the colony. He had much pleasure in supporting the amendment, and he hoped the other members who were interested would impress upon the Government the necessity of making some provision for roads in the North.

Mr. HOUSTON had pleasure in supporting the amendment. He had been a resident of the North of Auckland for over twenty years, and the settlers there were disheartened from the fact that, after forty years, their roads at the present time were in their existing state. There were many settlers who felt it would be impossible to remain there much longer without any roads. They had no roads whatever,—simply tracks,—and it was impossible to get any assistance. He would give one instance: A case had occurred at Hokianga where a doctor was required to hold an inquest, and he had to go by sea from Auckland in order to get to Hokianga to attend the inquest. He wished to impress the House with the fact that some assistance should be given by the Government to open up their northern roads. There were large areas of Native land in the North that did not contribute anything to the local rates. The whole burden fell upon the unfortunate settlers who were scattered over the district. They had large areas of very inferior land in the district, and this land was contributing more to the general revenue of the colony than any other portion of the colony. In course of time the gumfields would be exhausted, and the local bodies had levied the maximum rate allowed by law. What was called the Main North Road was simply a road on paper, and, if any one attempted to go from Auckland to the North Cape it would probably be two months before he got there. Probably he would not get half-way. There were no roads, and the rivers in many cases were not bridged, the result being that the settlers were simply imprisoned for five or six months; and this was the case on both the western and the eastern side of his electoral district, and, in fact, all over the district. He hoped the Government would be able to see their way to take the matter up and to maintain the Main North

Road; or, if they put it into a state of repair, he believed that the local bodies would exert themselves to maintain the by-roads, so as to enable the settlers to get on to the main road. Several local bodies in his electorate had come to the determination that if something were not done they would give up taking any part in local affairs. When the Minister of Lands visited this district in 1891 he saw for himself the state of things, and he said that the half had not been told, and that he had no idea that the roads were in such a state. He admitted that the present Government had done perhaps more than any other Government in his memory, but they had not done half enough. If the Government could see their way clear to take over the main road the local bodies would maintain the by-roads. He had much pleasure in supporting the amendment of the honourable member for Waitemata.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he hardly thought that the honourable member for Waitemata could have been in earnest when he moved his amendment; otherwise he thought that he would have consulted the other members representing the electorates through which the Main North Road passes. He considered it would be a wrong step for the Government to attempt to take over such a large road as this main road north of Auckland, as in his opinion if the Government were to undertake that road they could not refuse to take over other main roads in the colony. But they were in duty bound to render some assistance to the North when voting money for road-works. A very large population resided north of Auckland, and it must not be forgotten that on the gumfields a large number of men were employed, and more was contributed by them in the shape of Customs duties in proportion than by those living in the main centres. The Government had during the last eight years voted nothing for the maintenance of the main road in question, or for roads where there was gum and timber traffic. It was only reasonable that, now the Government had sold a number of kauri forests in the North at fair prices, the Government should consider the struggling settlers north of Auckland, inasmuch as the district was practically without metal, and the roads were more expensive to maintain, consequent upon the heavy gum and timber traffic. He thought the district was entitled to some consideration, seeing the amount of revenue it contributed. The honourable member for the Bay of Islands had stated that only the present Government had done anything for the districts north of Auckland, and more than had been done by any previous Government. He would call the attention of the honourable member to the fact that during the sessions of 1832 and 1884 the sum of £125,000 was voted by Parliament and expended under the supervision and control of the County Councils in the North of Auckland. It was his duty to point that fact out to the House.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the honourable member for the Bay of Islands said that southern members had no idea of the nature of the

roads north of Auckland, and inferred that the roads in the South were very much better than in other parts of the colony. He ventured to say that he had as much experience in the matter as the honourable member for the Bay of Islands, and if the motion were amended so as to apply to other parts he would be prepared to support it. During the discussion, they had heard that no less a sum than £125,000 had been spent in that part of the colony north of Waitemata. Whilst in no way detracting from what the Government had done for the district he represented—and he might say the Minister of Lands had met him in a fair spirit regarding anything he had brought under his notice—still, in many of the districts in Otago there was a great deal of useless expenditure going on. They had surveyors and engineers at work in the district he represented, and instead of making a road in the direction of settlement they would lay it out away from such settlement. He thought that roads should be made where the settlers were living, and that country where there were no settlers should be left for the future. Regarding the requests that might be urged in the House for extension of these conveniences to the people, it ought not to be considered a personal matter on the part of those who represented these districts. The settlers in these districts were the pioneers, and the Government should assist them, so that people in the cities might have the opportunity of forming homes for themselves. It would relieve the "unemployed" difficulty by drawing them from the cities. He hoped, therefore, the Minister would not take this motion as being one affecting only the North of Auckland, but would regard it as having a general application.

Mr. SHERA thought it would be admitted that the representatives of the northern part of the North Island had made out a good case—an unanswerable case—and he hoped the Minister would accept the amendment; and, if he did not accept the amendment, that he would give a promise that a very large sum would be placed on the estimates for roads north of Auckland—a sum of at least £25,000.

Mr. T. THOMPSON very much regretted that the sincerity of the honourable member who moved the amendment had been doubted, because there was such urgent necessity for assistance that he thought the honourable gentleman must have been sincere in moving the amendment. It had been pointed out that the honourable gentleman had not consulted the city members; but perhaps in the past the city members had not given the assistance to the neglected North they should have given. However, he thought the honourable member for Marsden and the honourable member for the Bay of Islands had made out a very good case. The North of Auckland had been very exceptionally situated. It had received very little expenditure in the way of railways; and it had received very little, despite what the honourable member for Eden had said, in the way of expenditure upon roads. The Minister of Lands told him a year or two ago, when he

visited that place, that the land was as good as was to be found in any part of the colony, although it was somewhat patchy; but it was a matter of extreme surprise to him how the settlers managed to get to and from their farms: he said the roads in many places were not fit for horse-traffic, far less for vehicle-traffic. The Minister would be doing well if he gave some encouragement to the hard-working and long-neglected settlers of the North of Auckland. As far as he (Mr. Thompson) was concerned, the Northern members would have no reason to complain of his not assisting them, for he would always be prepared to help them in this and other matters.

Mr. W. KELLY was prepared to assist the members from the North of Auckland; but he thought there were other parts of the Auckland District which were as much in need of roads, and he hoped that whatever was done it would be made general. The southern portion of the Provincial District of Auckland was, he believed, in a far worse position in regard to roads than the North of Auckland was. The southern part of the provincial district had been neglected for years past. Some years ago large sums of money were voted for roads and bridges north of Auckland, and nothing was voted, so far as he remembered, for similar works south of Auckland. The roads south of Auckland were, as many honourable members knew, in a worse condition than those north of Auckland. He was sure there were honourable gentlemen in that House who had travelled through the Rotorua district, and who knew the state of the roads in that part of the colony. He had no objection to the North of Auckland members obtaining what was necessary, but he thought what was done ought to be general. The Te Aroha and Rotorua Railways had no feeders, and he thought roads should be made from the coast to these lines. He hoped the Minister for Public Works, in any arrangement he might make with the North of Auckland members, would see that the southern portion of the Auckland Provincial District was attended to as well.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the question of roads north of Auckland had found a place in successive estimates for many years, and they still found the subject, as fishermen would say, "All alive, oh!" It was very much alive indeed. The Auckland members had taken the opportunity of bemoaning the wrongs of the settlers north of Auckland and in other parts of that provincial district. They were suffering from want of roads; but, as far as he could understand, they had at least the lines laid out on which good roads could be made. He was sorry, however, that in the Wairarapa they were very much worse off than that. They had not got the land on which the local bodies could make the roads. Successive Governments, commencing with the Provincial Government, had been perfectly content to pocket the money for the land sold to the settlers, and made no provision whatever for roads that could be used for taking the produce to market. He would like very much to branch off upon a

kindred subject that was before the House very prominently last session, but he was afraid the rules of debate would scarcely permit his doing so. He would, therefore, not digress, but content himself with expressing the hope that the Premier, in dealing with this question, would include the whole colony.

Mr. SEDDON said he would visit the district after the session and see for himself.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought the Wairarapa had even prior claims to the North of Auckland.

Mr. HARKNESS said, if the speeches of honourable members from the North of Auckland proved anything, it was that we should have some more efficient mode of local government. The important matters now under the consideration of the colony—namely, Native land, and other important questions—sank into insignificance as compared with the necessity for the reorganization of the whole system of local government. As a matter of fact, we had too much local government.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member was travelling beyond the question before the House.

Mr. HARKNESS said he had no desire to transgress the rules of debate: there was an intimate relation between the amendment and local finance. There was no reason that the main road north of Auckland should be specially dealt with, or that the Wairarapa roads should be treated in a similar manner, or that the main trunk road from Nelson to Buller should be specially dealt with; but the Government should bring in some measure of local government, and give to the bodies now in existence better means to maintain the roads, without coming to the Colonial Exchequer.

Mr. FISHER said all the Auckland members who had spoken upon this question were staunch Government supporters, therefore there was no necessity for making this road. But he did wish to make a remark with regard to a road in the Wellington Provincial District. The honourable member for Rangitikei referred to a road some weeks ago—namely, the road from the Oroua River to the Apiti Block. If the Government had money to spend on roads for opening up new country, that was a place where something ought to be spent.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was not keeping to the question.

Mr. FISHER merely wished to say that he agreed with the honourable member for the East Coast that it would be much better for the Government to deal with this subject in a general way.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he was not a supporter of the Government, and he also was an Auckland member. He desired to point out, in connection with the North of Auckland, that that district received large sums of money in lieu of railways at one time. There was one vote of £100,000 he knew of, for the very good reason that they managed to get the Mangere Bridge out of it. It had been said that there were no railways in the North of Auckland, but

he might mention that there were the Helensville line, the Whangarei line, and the Kaihu Valley line. There had been large votes for the extension of the line from Helensville northward, and for other works. At the present time the Government were carrying on co-operative works to a large extent. Then, he might mention that £67,000 was practically wasted over special settlements. Instead of the men being put on to make good roads, they simply made small drains and tunnels about the ground—in fact, they simply made a farce of the whole business. Up to the present time the North of Auckland had received large sums of money, which they had muddled away. The House had constantly been giving them large sums of money. He intended to support the honourable member in getting this money, but it was quite unfair to try to make out that the present Government had done more than any other Government; and to laud them up in the ears of the country when they knew that the Government merely gave a sum for particular works, which they were told at the time would be of no use, and when they really needed all the money they could get to spend on roads, was quite absurd. When the necessity for the roads was talked of at that time, the honourable member for Marsden said, "Oh! no; we want a railway to Puhipuhi," or something of that kind; and the honourable member for the Bay of Islands said that he wanted a railway also to some other place. Money spent upon railway-construction was spent to no purpose when they had good water-communication, as in those districts they had; and had they taken the money that had been wasted on these railways and spent it upon roads the country would have been far better off than it was at the present day. They had simply been wasting their heritage in useless railways—railways that could not possibly be of the slightest use for many years to come. That was what they had been doing with the public money, instead of expending it upon a good many roads. Only the other day the House passed a Vehicles-licensing Bill, the object of which was to provide money for the maintenance of roads North of Auckland. Well, he admitted that the roads there were in a bad state, but the roads south of Auckland were in just as bad a state. The districts south of Auckland had got very few sums from different Governments for the improvement of their roads, but they had not gone in for such wholesale begging as was going on at the present time. He hoped the Government would put a good sum on the estimates, and that, if they were going to attend to the roads north of Auckland, they would also give some attention to those south of Auckland as well. They all knew what the roads in new districts were like, more particularly if those roads ran through the bush, where the rain hung on the trees and kept the roads muddy. It was the same up North in that respect as it was in some other parts of the colony. He remembered that when the Thames diggings broke out there could not be worse roads anywhere than they

Mr. Buckland

had there then. It was absolutely impossible to use them. He hoped the Government would spend a little more money upon the roads; and, in making the remarks he had made, he had desired to show that the North Auckland district had not been so entirely neglected in the past as some honourable members wished to make out. The Government would have done much better if they had devoted their attention to improving the roads in that district, instead of taking money and spending it upon railways which were utterly useless.

Mr. BRUCE just wished to say he intended to support the amendment of the honourable member for Waitemata. This question of roads, ever since he had been in the House, had been dealt with in an extremely happy-go-lucky manner. He intended to support the honourable member for Waitemata, for this reason: that the solution of the matter appeared to be that the Government ought to make the main arterial roads of the country, because all classes of the community were directly or indirectly benefited by the construction of these roads. He had heard nothing that night, in connection with the complaint of the honourable member for Auckland City, as to whether the people in that district had taken advantage, as those further south had done, of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act.

Mr. PALMER.—We have, Sir.

Mr. BRUCE just wished to say that he quite agreed with what had already been said that night: that if this matter of road-construction was to be taken over by the Government it ought to be given a general application. In his immediate district the people had made all their roads by means of the Government Loans to Local Bodies Act, and they had never got the "thirds" either. It was the most rapidly-growing district in the colony, and yet never since he had been in the House this time had he been able to get one sixpence from the Government for roads in that district. The Government ought to take that into their serious consideration. The tracks in his electorate were all but impassable, and, although the bulk of the settlers were poor, they took upon themselves the responsibility of making use of the means offered in the Act he had mentioned to construct the roads they so urgently needed. If they were so badly off in the North of Auckland they ought to take a leaf out of the book of the settlers in his district as to the way in which the thing should be done. He hoped, in any case, the application of this question would be general, and that the Government would pay attention to the construction of the arterial roads of the country, those in the Rangitikei District included.

Mr. RICHARDSON thought the members representing Auckland, and the North of Auckland in particular, should be made acquainted with the point of view from which this question was regarded by members of the Government. Speaking at Fortrose on the 14th or 15th June last, the Colonial Treasurer said,—

"He wished to refer to another point, and

that was with regard to the statement that a member who represented a constituency and who had, perhaps, been unfortunate enough to obtain a seat in a Ministry should work for the interest of the colony first and then his constituency afterwards. . . . There should be plain speaking upon this point. Every part of the colony, when it comes to the preparation of the estimates, had to be considered, and if a member did not apply at the right time for any assistance his district wanted he was left out in the allocation of the money. He declined to be compared to a parish politician for attending to his district. It was his duty to do his best for his constituents, and in doing so he felt he was also promoting the interests of the colony generally."

If that lesson was being acted on now, the Premier had only to thank the Colonial Treasurer for enunciating it.

Captain RUSSELL felt that he must follow the example that had been given him by urging that, if there were to be roads made north of Auckland, if they were to be properly continued they would run right down the eastern coast. But they would not reach the district he had the honour to represent. The people of this East Coast district had never been sturdy beggars, and he merely wished to place on record the fact that this district had never been properly treated. It had never enjoyed the benefit of a vote of £100,000, as in the case of the North Auckland district; yet it was a district of unexampled fertility. Taking the whole of that country, say, from a few miles north of Napier right up to the Thames district, it could be said with perfect truth that, although it had been represented by able members, they had not been able to get any money out of the Government; and the consequence was that this extremely productive district had been entirely neglected. He thought it was time the Government took the matter seriously into its consideration. The people there, for whom he had the highest respect, had contributed a very great deal of the taxation of the country; and yet their contribution to the taxation had never been recognised in any way at all. They had been treated from year to year as if they were not entitled to receive anything. Nothing had been done in the shape of public works, except, perhaps, the construction of a breakwater, and even that they had had to pay for. With that single exception they had had no public works of any description. If, therefore, there was to be a scramble for public money this district had a right to its share. He wished to place on record the fact that it had always been neglected.

Mr. DUTHIE said he did not represent a country constituency, but he took much interest in the District of Masterton, and the honourable member for that district had several times in the House drawn a picture of the urgent necessity that existed in a portion of that district—the Forty-mile Bush—which was in a more desperate condition, according to him, than the north of Auckland; and in his absence he might, therefore, put in a good

word in the interests of the District of Masterton. The Government ought to improve that part of the country by the construction of roads. The settlers there were mostly poor leasehold people, who could not afford to pay taxation; and if that district was to be developed it was imperative that the Government should render assistance. If the Government saw their way to improve that district by better road-communication he would be happy to support them. There was no district that called more urgently for assistance than that represented by the honourable member for Masterton.

Amendment negatived.

PUBLIC WORKS STATEMENT.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. ROLLESTON said he did not propose to obstruct business, or to occupy the time of the House more than two minutes; but he thought the occasion was one which ought not to be passed by without a few remarks. He was going to ask the Premier to give the House an assurance as to the course which he proposed to take with regard to the Public Works Statement and the public-works estimates, and to press upon him to give the House an assurance that if they went into the estimates that night it would only be to take a small amount of those estimates, and that he would state a definite date for bringing down the Public Works Statement. The debate which had taken place was a striking example of the necessity that existed for the House having before it on an occasion of this kind the whole scheme of the Government with reference to the Public Works Statement. He thought it was Sir Julius Vogel who stated some years ago that the day was approaching when the word "road" or "bridge" would never be mentioned in the House, except for the purpose of members congratulating themselves that full provision had been made for giving effect to the scheme of public works in connection with local government. He thought they were getting further and further from a day when any Government could tackle that question of local government and make a proper provision for the execution of roads. There was no question that the policy of the country at the present time was—roads, roads, roads; and he hoped the Premier would give them an assurance that he would enable them to consider the whole scheme of the expenditure of the Government at an early date. It was not fair or right to have the Public Works Statement put off, as it was the previous year, until the last days of the session—to a time when notice had been given for the suspension of Standing Orders, to wind up the work of the session. Nothing, he thought, was more humiliating than the course taken last year by the Government in respect to the Public Works Statement; and he hoped that, all party considerations apart, the House would help him to press upon the attention of the Government the necessity of not repeating the state of things that occurred the previous

year. The public-works estimates were concluded at half-past seven in the morning, and they sat up the whole night taking them through. Was that a proper state of things? Was it right that members should go home to their several districts and say that the public-works estimates were forced through by the Ministry without amendment during the whole hours of a long night? It was not right, now that they proposed to institute a scheme of public works based upon revenue, that they should not, in dealing with the general estimates, have before them the proposals of the Government with regard to public works. It was all the more necessary because the land revenue was becoming part of the Consolidated Fund, and they had a right to know what they were going to do. He had no wish to revive the financial debate, but he was one of those who believed that the Government ought to take the House into its confidence. It was necessary to maintain a strong finance; and honourable members, when they went to their homes, should be able to show to their constituents that they took an intelligent interest in bringing that about. The Public Works Statement had been brought down at different dates in different years. He did not at all pretend to say that one Government was much better than another in this respect, but he did not think that was any reason for following in the same track and making the same mistakes. Indeed, there was now a different state of things. Previously public works were carried on out of loan; now they were constructed out of revenue; and that was the reason why it was essential to make a change in the course that was adopted. He had before him a statement of the dates on which the Public Works Statements had been brought down in previous years. It was as follows:—

Years.	Date of Parliament opening.	Date on which Financial Statement delivered.	Date of Delivery of Public Works Statement.	No of Days between Opening of Parliament and Delivery of Public Works Statement.
1884 ..	Aug. 7	Sept. 26	Oct. 24	77 days.
1885 ..	June 11	June 19	Aug. 25	75 "
1886 ..	May 18	May 25	June 25	42 "
1887 ..	Oct. 6	Nov. 1	Dec. 12	67 "
1888 ..	May 10	May 29	Aug. 18	99 "
1889 ..	June 20	June 25	Aug. 7	48 "
1890 ..	June 19	June 25	July 25	36 "
1891 ..	June 11	June 16	Sept. 8	88 "
1892 ..	June 23	June 30	Sept. 27	95 "
1893 ..	June 22	July 4		

This year they had been already fifty-three days in session, and they were told by the Premier the reason why he had not given them the public-works estimates was that all interest in public works would be gone when he brought down his Statement.

Mr. Rolleston

Mr. SEDDON said that was not what he said.

Mr. ROLLESTON said, Well, it was something very like it; it was to the effect that honourable members could not be expected to give attention to work after it had been brought down. They were not worthy of a place in that House if their attention to large measures could not be counted on after the proposals for a few roads and bridges had been brought down. He hoped the Premier would give them his assurance, first with regard to that night, that he would not endeavour to force through anything more than a few of the ordinary items; and, secondly, that he would bring down the Public Works Statement at an early date, before going at any length into the estimates.

Mr. GUINNESS thought the discussion on the amendment of the honourable member for Waitemata had shown very conclusively that it was absolutely necessary for the Government seriously to consider the question of local government, and he regretted very much that the time at the disposal of the Government prevented their bringing down this session a comprehensive measure on the question. They had had the time of the House occupied since eleven o'clock, and had heard twelve or fifteen honourable members speaking all upon the question of making a road or roads North of Auckland. The time of the House was constantly taken up in discussing small local matters. They were very likely important matters to the districts; but they were matters of local government; and what was really wanted was a strong system of local government to be brought into force, with a sound finance, and a reduction in the number of local governing bodies, so that they could decide all questions which might properly be relegated to local governing bodies. Then the Parliament would have time to discharge the proper functions it had to perform, and not have most of the time of the session taken up in discussing matters which were really matters of local government. One remark made by the leader of the Opposition, he thought, was a very unfortunate one. That honourable gentleman said the reason for bringing down the Public Works Statement now was that we were going to expend money on public works out of revenue, whereas in previous years it had been out of loans; therefore there was the more necessity to discuss the question as to how that should be expended than there was when they were out of loan.

Mr. ROLLESTON said what he had stated was, that there was the more reason now for discussing the public-works estimates in connection with the fund from which they were to come. They were dealing with the Consolidated Fund—that is, the taxation of the people—and therefore it was the more necessary to have the works before them that were to come out of that fund.

Mr. GUINNESS failed to see that his argument was in any way altered. How was it possible, or was there anything in his conten-

tion, to say that loan-money should be less considered in the way of its application or expenditure than money got from taxation? It came to exactly the same thing. If the honourable gentleman did not say that, there was no reason for his mentioning the subject at all. He thought whether the money came out of loan or from taxation the same duty was cast on every member of the House, and upon the Government, to see that it was spent in the most wise and proper direction. Therefore there was no more necessity now for an early delivery of the Statement than there was when millions of money was being spent out of loan. He only rose, however, for the purpose of particularly emphasizing the absolute necessity for this or any Government that might occupy those benches to consider the most important question that Parliament had to deal with—that of local government; and he did hope that this Government would before long bring forward a scheme, even if only to lay it before the House for discussion, so that the electors of the country might have an opportunity of discussing the question and returning members pledged to deal with it. It was the duty of the Government to do that before the session closed, and he would sooner see that done than see passed a good many of the Bills which they had brought down.

Sir R. STOUT thought the honourable member for Halswell was slightly in error in the way he had put the date of the Public Works Statement in 1884. The fact regarding 1884 was that he had pixed up two sessions. There was a second session, in which they did not meet till August; but the Ministry was not formed till the 3rd September, and the Statement was brought down on the 24th October.

Mr. ROLLESTON said that made fifty-one days.

Sir R. STOUT said that was so. He agreed that the Statement should be brought down speedily. And he did not think that it was unreasonable to ask that it should be brought down as soon as possible, and he did not think any Statement should be left till the end of the session. He had been always opposed to that when he was in the House before; and no doubt the Premier would give a promise that he would bring it down shortly. He wished, however, to say this, further: that he did not speak on the question of the roads north of Auckland, because it was made local in its application; but he agreed with several honourable members that there was a need of something being done in dealing with the main roads in those districts where they had small rating-powers. In his opinion there would have to be a distinction drawn between the two classes of districts in the colony, and those long-settled, and where there was property that could be rated, ought not to get the same aid by way of subsidy as those which had no rating-area. The colony would have to recognise this, and if any aid by subsidy at all was granted they should recognise also the roads that might be termed main arterial lines. The Government was now paying large sums for the road be-

tween Christchurch and the West Coast: he believed it was about £12,000 a year.

Mr. SEDDON said the amount paid for the road between Nelson and Hokitika was £23,000, and for the road between Christchurch and Hokitika, £28,000.

Sir R. STOUT understood that a subsidy was also paid for North Island roads. With regard to the principles of local government, he recognised that something would have to be done in that matter—not with regard to form, but with regard to finance. That was really the trouble with the whole of the local bodies. If they had plenty of money the present system would do well enough. And he believed what he had suggested over and over again would have to be carried out—that, if they had their land let on perpetual lease, that should be made endowments for the local bodies. Those people who were constantly preaching about selling the Crown land and turning it into freehold were doing their best to stop any sound local finance in the colony. He believed the only chance of stable local finance was by leasing the land on perpetual lease, and giving the rents to the local bodies. As to charitable aid, they ought to have a large reserve of a million acres, as he had previously advocated, and the rents ought to be divided according to population throughout the colony—he did not care where the land was situated. He had no doubt whatever that the Premier would give a reasonable promise about the Public Works Statement.

Captain RUSSELL thought he remembered some years ago suggesting to the honourable member for Inangahua that there should be some system of granting subsidies to local bodies on a principle of granting them on an inverse ratio to the rateable value of districts. It seemed to him that that was the only way by which subsidies should be granted. There could be no doubt that the present system was quite absurd, and ought to be changed. The honourable member for the Grey seemed to quite misapprehend the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition in the matter of the Public Works Statement; and he thought the Premier ought to give the Opposition credit for its extreme moderation in regard to that Statement. He claimed that the whole of the expenditure of the colony should be submitted in one. If public works were to be carried on for the future out of revenue the whole system of finance of the Government should hinge upon the amount of receipts and expenditure including public works, and he was not sure that, if the Opposition were a little bit stronger, it would not be their duty to make a serious debate on the subject of the withholding of the Public Works Statement, and divide the House upon it; but he recognised that they were in such a minority at present that it would be futile to raise a debate; but it was a matter of the most serious importance. The whole finance seemed to him to be brought down piecemeal. There was the subject of Colonel Fox's report. There were various suggestions in that for improving the

armament of the colony or increasing the Volunteers; and, if they started now and went through the estimates as far as their endurance would allow, they would do so without being told anything about public works or the amount of money the Government proposed to spend in improving the defences of the colony. It seemed to him that they were now going into the estimates without knowing what the total expenditure was to be. They would be voting money blindly, without knowing what were the proposals with regard to defence and public works. It would be futile of the Opposition to divide the House, but he felt they were not being properly treated in this matter.

Mr. BUCHANAN did not propose to take up the time of the House, because he had no wish at all to stop the Premier from getting into Supply, but he could not refrain from saying something with reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Inangahua. That honourable gentleman said that they would have no stable local government until they had the whole of the lands of the colony under lease. He understood him to say that.

Mr. SEDDON rose to a point of order. He had it on his notes that the honourable member spoke on the question, That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question. That was the way in which the question was put. Having spoken upon that, he took it the honourable member could not speak again.

Mr. BUCHANAN thought, if he was not mistaken, he spoke on the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Waitemata.

Mr. SPEAKER said the position with regard to supply was peculiar: that was to say, the procedure differed from any other procedure of the House. When an amendment was moved on going into Supply, although the general question was one which admitted of debate upon almost any subject, the debate was at once restricted to the particular amendment brought forward. But, after that was disposed of, all but the mover and seconder of the amendment could speak to the general question of supply.

Mr. BUCHANAN would ask the honourable member for Inangahua where the difficulty had arisen in the colony with regard to local self-government. Was it not invariably in the poorer districts of the colony? Where was the difficulty, for instance, in the County of Selwyn, Canterbury, a district which was closely settled, easily roaded, and where the rates required were easily raised? He would ask the honourable gentleman, therefore, with regard to the remedy he proposed, whether or not he was likely to have less difficulty in regard to local government in the new districts where the land was being leased. He ventured to say the difficulty as regarded the finance of local government would be found just as great under the new leasing as under the old freehold system. With regard to local government, they had a Rating Bill on the Order Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentle-

Captain Russell

man could not speak to any Bill or motion on the Order Paper, nor refer to a previous debate.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he merely made reference to it, as they were invited to pass legislation exempting all improvements from being rated by the local bodies. Now, if that were carried, what would be the result? Why, that this very difficulty which had been referred to regarding the poorer lands of the colony, and almost invariably as to the districts which required a much larger expenditure to make the roads, would be seriously intensified if the proposed system of rating were carried into effect. He was sure a great deal more noise was made with regard to the so-called necessity for local-government reform than was justified by the actual position. It was mainly a question of finance for the poorer districts. The difficulties in connection with the subject were special ones, having reference to particular districts, and he thought this or the succeeding Parliament should face the difficulty, and effect a radical improvement with regard to these districts.

Mr. HOGG thought the argument that had been used by the leader of the Opposition, that the Public Works Statement should be brought down almost simultaneously with the Financial Statement, was not a very tenable one. He understood that the honourable gentleman stated that when the public works had to be constructed out of loan there was then some reason for an interval elapsing between the two Statements, but now the works had to be constructed out of consolidated revenue there was no reason whatever for any interval of the kind. Well, he was unable to follow this line of reasoning, because he apprehended that, before they could possibly ascertain the actual revenue that was likely to be available for public works they must first have considered the Financial Statement and dealt with the estimates. It seemed to him that what the honourable gentleman really wished the Premier and the Government to do was, to use a familiar illustration, to put the cart before the horse. He had no doubt the Ministry would do their duty in this matter, and would bring down the Statement at as early a date as they possibly could, but, at the same time, he thought the Government were perfectly right in demanding that the estimates should be fairly considered and dealt with before this Statement was produced. With regard to what had been said about the wants of new districts, and especially the requirements of the districts north of Auckland, he should like to see some attention devoted to the requirements of the districts north of Wellington. If there was a need for assistance in the matter of roads and bridges in any part of New Zealand, it was in that locality, where so much settlement was going on. The position of many of the settlers there was simply deplorable, and he trusted honourable members would assist the Government in endeavouring to act a generous and sensible part in helping the work of colonisation in the Wairarapa bush. With reference to what had been stated by previous speakers

respecting the exemption of improvements from rating, he believed there was a very general desire that a change of this kind should be brought about in connection with the system of local government. At the same time, he could conceive, if this alteration was effected, it would press heavily on some young settlers who were breaking up their land, and whose properties were not yet in a reproductive condition. Speaking on the question of local government, he might say that he indorsed the remark made by several speakers that the sooner the Government tackled this question the better it would be for the country. There were several important things required in connection with the reform of the present system, and one thing he would suggest, which he did not think had been referred to by other speakers, was that they should have an amended Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act as speedily as possible. The present Act had been an incubus on the settlers generally in the country districts. It had been the means of draining the money from the small settlers, so badly required for roads and bridges, into large centres, to support a system of pauperism. He knew of no Act which had done more injury to country districts than the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act. From his district and the district represented by the honourable member for Wairarapa it had drained thousands of pounds from the producers—the small settlers, who toiled hard on the land. These large sums were transmitted to Wellington for the purpose of being expended not, he believed, for the benefit of the city, but to foster a system of pauperism. He hoped some radical alteration would be made, and that if the country districts were willing to support their own poor they would not be asked to contribute in the manner they did towards the thriftless and the criminal classes in the larger centres.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said honourable members would recollect that some districts in the colony received the very greatest aid from the Government, while those districts contributed little or nothing towards the funds.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh!

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought those honourable members would admit that Canterbury, while she contributed very little indeed, received a larger proportion than the Provincial District of Otago, while Otago contributed a larger proportion than Canterbury. These were facts which, he took it, would not be controverted. With regard to the question of charitable aid, the honourable gentleman who had just sat down might have given some indication as to how the moiety was to be raised from the public. He was aware, no doubt, that it was raised partly from the land. He believed that equal rates should be levied upon all forms of property, whether it consisted of land or personal property. The honourable gentleman said, too, that the Premier was quite right to keep back the Public Works Statement, and that it was placing the cart before the horse to ask that it should be brought down. The honourable gentleman

was one of those members in the House who, no matter what the Government did, approved of it. That position was a very good one, from a Ministerial point of view. The honourable gentleman's constant praise and approval of Government measures reminded one of the landlord in "Tam o' Shanter" whose laugh was always a ready chorus. He considered that the House would be quite justified in preventing the business from going on until they had the Public Works Statement. They were asked to discuss the finances of the colony; and how were the finances laid before the House? First of all they got the Financial Statement, attached to which they were told there were tables to elucidate what was contained in the Statement. But the figures in those tables were entirely misleading and inaccurate. Then, they were told they were to look to the public accounts of the colony for information. But when did they get those public accounts? Six or eight months after the session was over; so that it was impossible that they could refer to those accounts in the debates in the House. He strongly supported the leader of the Opposition in the contention that, as portions of the moneys which now came under the Public Works Statement was largely derived from taxation of the people of the colony, that Statement ought to be on the floor of the House immediately after the disposal of the Financial Statement. There were just one or two matters he would like to refer to, as they had not many opportunities of going fully into the business of the country. With regard to the "Unauthorised expenditure" of last year, they found that a charitably-disposed Government were most lavish in their gifts, particularly where they had political ends to serve; but never before in the history of the colony had they seen an item of this sort on the estimates: A man got a sum of money because his wife was ill; and there they had the Premier sitting in his place looking as smug as possible over it. Mr. T. J. Clapham, of the General Post Office, received £296 9s. because his wife was ill,—and those people were in affluent circumstances.

Mr. SEDDON.—It was a retiring-allowance.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said it was not a retiring-allowance at all. The item was set down in the "Unauthorised expenditure," "On account of wife's illness, £296 9s." This appeared on the last estimates. He wondered how much a political friend of the Government would get if his sister or his aunt had been ill. He had made inquiries, and had found these people were not poor people by any means. He thought the suggestion of the honourable member for Inangahua with regard to subsidies should receive the consideration of the House, and that it would be a good thing if they could get the interest coming from perpetual leases: it would be of great assistance to the settlers in the back-country. He thought the forcing-on of the estimates at that late hour of the night would not meet with the approval of the country. The country would support the House in objecting to votes being

brought on for consideration after midnight. The Government should have so placed Supply on the Order Paper that it might have come on for discussion early in the afternoon. When the Financial Statement was discussed all other business was placed on one side and it was made the first order of the day. Why did the Government not do exactly the same thing with the estimates? He hoped the country would insist that in future, when the estimates came down, they should be made the first order of the day, instead of being brought on at midnight so that they could not be properly considered.

Sir J. HALL was not at all anxious to speak on the subject, as, at that late hour, he did not wish to detain the House.

Mr. SEDDON said it must strike every thinking person in the colony that there were in the present House a very much larger number of speeches than there had ever been before on questions that came before it.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh! Look up *Hansard*.

Mr. SEDDON said he had been in the House a good many years, and he might have sinned in that respect sometimes, but he had never before known so many members to speak on a subject. On that subject they had the honourable member for Manukau, the honourable member for Eden, the honourable member for Wairarapa, the honourable member for Maitāhara—

Mr. RICHARDSON said he had not spoken on the question.

Mr. SEDDON said the motion before the House was that they should go into Committee of Supply, upon which an amendment was proposed to strike out certain words, upon which the honourable members he had mentioned had spoken. It was true they were not long speeches, but when so many honourable members spoke it took up time. He had suspended answering questions, and it was now twenty minutes to one o'clock, and they had not yet dealt with the second order of the day. It was impossible for members to get through the business of the country if so much time was taken up in speechmaking. He had informed the House that the Government were desirous of getting through the first two orders and of taking the debate upon going into Supply. With regard to the policy Bills of the Government, these had scarcely yet been touched. They had that day passed the second reading of the Cheviot Estate Disposition Bill, which had now to go to the Waste Lands Committee. In the face of all that, a number of honourable members on the same side got up, and simply repeated what some one else had said, when there was no necessity for it at all. The leader of the Opposition had very reasonably asked him to make a statement as regarded the Public Works Statement. He thought it would be admitted that he could not possibly frame his Public Works Statement, or bring it down, without knowing what their ways and means were. The whole of the financial proposals of the Government must hang together. They must see what money the House was going to

grant them. He would take the argument of the leader of the Opposition, that, because the Government carried on public works out of revenue, that was a reason why they should bring down their Statement earlier. Then, he would say that the revenue in that respect depended upon the taxation the House would give them, and it was mentioned in the Financial Statement that until they knew what the House was prepared to grant they would not be in a position to say definitely what public works would be proposed. Their proposals, as he had said, would hang together as a whole. It was the wish of the Government to bring down the Public Works Statement at as early a period as possible. It was now only a fortnight since the financial debate closed. The Statement on which that debate took place contained the whole of the Government's proposals, and was fuller in the information it gave than any Statement previously made. The only question that remained at issue, then, was this: What are the details of the expenditure of the £250,000 which is proposed in the Financial Statement to be devoted to public works? Thus the only object to be gained by bringing down the Public Works Statement was to show the works on which this money was to be expended. He said that, if it was a question of what roads and what bridges this money might be expended upon, it was absolutely nothing. The leader of the Opposition also asked whether the Government would be reasonable and take a few of the items of the estimates when the House got into Committee of Supply. He desired to get into the estimates as soon as possible, so that honourable members might take their time and pay due attention to the different items. His experience of the result of putting Supply down for the afternoon had been that, time after time, amendments had been moved, and the House did not get into Supply until twelve or one o'clock at night. Considerable time was thus lost, and it would be much better if honourable members would refrain from discussing the motion for going into Committee of Supply. The leader of the Opposition had also raised the question of local government. The honourable gentleman said that the whole question was one of roads and bridges, and that the remarks made by honourable members showed the necessity for the Government dealing with the question of local government. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that it was a question that must be dealt with, and the Government were not oblivious of that fact. It was their intention to deal with it. He did not know whether they would be able to do it this session, but he said that, next to the questions submitted to the House already, the question of local government was the most important.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—What about the main road north of Auckland?

Mr. SEDDON must claim the protection of the Chair against these continual interruptions.

Mr. SPEAKER said, as the Premier objected to these interjections as disconcerting, he must

Mr. T. Mackenzie

call upon honourable members not to make them. Usually interjections were allowed to pass if they were not of an objectionable character, but when they were objected to he could not allow them.

Mr. RICHARDSON rose to a point of order. The members of the Opposition were very anxious to get into Committee of Supply, but the honourable gentleman was now stonewalling his own motion.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not make such a remark.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member was playing with the Chair in rising to a point of order and then making such a remark. It was his intention to reply to what had been said that, he thought, required replying to. With regard to this question of subsidies to local bodies, which was connected with the finance, he might say at once that the Government were of the opinion that the present mode of dealing out subsidies was not in keeping with what was required. To say that outlying districts, where there were large areas of Crown land, and where the rateable property was very small, should get only the same subsidies as were given to cities, was very unfair. The time was approaching when the Government must deal with this question, and, in his opinion, those districts where there were large areas of Crown lands were entitled to receive double the subsidies that were given to districts where there was a considerable amount of rateable property. With regard to the Public Works Statement, it might be necessary to have a change, and to have a supplementary Public Works Statement, as was the case with respect to the Financial Statement and the general estimates. That would have to be the case if the Public Works Statement were brought down early. The leader of the Opposition said that he desired the Government to take the Opposition and the House into their fullest confidence. The Government had done that already, and he was now again doing it. The Government desired to pass certain legislation which was absolutely imperative in the interest of the colony, and they had indicated what that legislation was. They were doing their best to get it through, and, if the leader of the Opposition would assist the Government in getting that legislation through, as soon as possible thereafter the Public Works Statement would be brought down. He would therefore ask the leader of the Opposition to assist the Government in getting that legislation through. It was on the Order Paper, and was in a fair way of progress. With regard to the £226 9s. to which the honourable member for Clutha had alluded, and which he said was given to Mr. Clapham on account of the illness of his wife, the honourable gentleman was mistaken. It was a retiring-allowance or compensation to that officer for long service. Who ever heard of anything being given to a public servant on account of his wife's illness? He hoped now the House would go into Committee, and get through some items.

The House went into Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS III.—COLONIAL TREASURER.

Treasury Department, £6,151.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the Premier, in the course of his remarks, stated that the Government were anxious to pass certain legislation before bringing down the Public Works Statement, and until they knew how the House was going to deal with their taxation proposals it was impossible to tell the House how the Government were going to allocate the £250,000. Now, the Financial Statement did not inform the House that it was the intention of the Government to increase taxation, but rather that they were going to reduce taxation. How the Premier's statement could be reconciled with the Financial Statement he did not understand, as the taxation proposals had nothing whatever to do with the Public Works Statement. He agreed with the honourable member for Inangahua and the honourable member for Halswell that it was absolutely necessary that the House should be informed fully of how it was proposed to deal with public works this year, seeing that such were to be carried on out of revenue; and the Government would not be doing their duty unless they gave that information. The Premier was endeavouring to keep back the Public Works Statement until the end of the session, and to force the estimates through in one night, as he did last session, but he would warn the honourable gentleman that he would meet with the most strenuous opposition from the other side.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked the Colonial Treasurer, in connection with the vote for the Land- and Income-tax Department, if he was correct in assuming that mortgages were considered as land in the taxation proposals of the Government.

Mr. WARD said that was so.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said he would like it to be understood that mortgages for the first time in the history of New Zealand were treated as land. This contention of his had been denied. He should like to hansardise the fact that the previous Treasurer held the same opinion. In *Hansard*, Volume 76, of 1892, Mr. Ballance, in his reply on the Financial Statement, was reported to have said that under the land and income assessment mortgages were treated as land—

Mr. WARD presumed the honourable gentleman was aware of the fact that speeches in Committee were not fully reported in *Hansard*. He might suggest to him to select an opportunity when he would be fully reported.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the present occasion must do. Mr. Ballance stated in his speech "that mortgages had been transferred into another category; that we now treated them as land." He (Mr. Mackenzie) wished to make it clear that for the first time in the history of New Zealand mortgages had been charged as land. He was precluded by the forms of the House from referring to a previous debate, but close readers of *Hansard* would understand his reason for securing that

admission from the Colonial Treasurer, and his still further establishing the fact by reference to the late Mr. Ballance's speeches.

Vote, £6,151, agreed to.

Vote, Friendly Societies' Registry Office, £1,120, agreed to.

Land- and Income-tax Department, £7,494.

Mr. RHODES asked if the payment for the Cheviot Estate was shown under that vote.

Mr. WARD said the payment had not been made by the Land- and Income-tax Department, and should not be shown under that vote.

Mr. BUCHANAN pointed out that there was an increase in the item for "Contingencies."

Mr. WARD said he could give the honourable member the details. The business of the department had increased very materially, and owing to the very large increase in the business there had been an increase in the correspondence, requiring additional clerical assistance. At one time it was only necessary to arrange for an assessment every three years, but now it had to be done for income-tax every year, and that meant a very large increase in departmental work, and an increase in "Contingencies."

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said numerous persons had written to him complaining that they had written to the department in regard to exemptions which they claimed they were entitled to, and on other matters, and they had received no replies.

Mr. WARD said, if the honourable member would give him the names, he would have the cases inquired into; but he could assure the honourable gentleman that the correspondence in this department was kept close up.

Mr. R. THOMPSON would like to ask the Colonial Treasurer if it was his intention to have the claims of certain Reviewers looked into. He understood that a number of petitions were likely to be sent to Parliament on this question. He would earnestly ask the Treasurer to take this matter in hand, and not wait until the matter was pressed upon him, perhaps, in a more unpleasant form. The correspondence showed that these men had not been treated fairly.

Sir J. HALL said, if the last speaker referred merely to payments which Reviewers thought they ought to have received in the past, he had nothing to say; but, if he referred to payments to Reviewers in future, he hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not entertain the proposal. Imputations had been made that Reviewers had been appointed on account of their political colour. However that might or might not be, it would be still more likely to be the case if the appointment involved a payment. He hoped that Reviewers would be persons who accepted the position as a matter of duty to their fellow-citizens.

Mr. R. THOMPSON said he referred to the case of a number of gentlemen who had been acting as Reviewers for a number of years, and who had received payment for their services. They were appointed for the last valuation, but received no notice that they would

not receive the usual payment. They had sent in their claims as in previous years, and they were politely informed that they were not to expect any payment, as the department expected them to do the work for nothing. If the Government expected them to do the work gratuitously, they ought to have been so informed.

Mr. WARD said the honourable member for Marsden was no doubt referring to cases which had occurred in his own district. The position was this: The former Colonial Treasurer when the last Reviewers were appointed decided that they were not to be paid. The position was to be honorary, and they were to receive travelling-expenses only. That, he (Mr. Ward) thought, was the right position. He did not think Reviewers should be paid. He thought such a case as that referred to by the honourable member for Marsden was a proper one to be referred to a Committee.

Mr. R. THOMPSON said he simply brought before the Colonial Treasurer what had been represented to him to be a grievance. He thought it would be much better if Reviewers were not paid, but he thought that in this case there was a grievance, and the Government should deal with the matter in whatever way seemed fair and reasonable.

Vote, £7,494, agreed to.

Treasury: Miscellaneous services, £11,596.

Mr. RICHARDSON said a cheque was paid for the Cheviot Estate by the Treasury, and should appear under this heading. They knew what occurred in regard to that sale. They knew that the cheque for £60,000-odd was given to the vendors and taken by them to the Union Bank, and was there regarded with a certain amount of doubt, with the result that gold had to be taken in bags to the bank, and that the amount was actually paid in gold.

Mr. WARD could scarcely think that the honourable gentleman could believe that any cheque of the Government of the colony was refused by any bank. It was refused by Mr. Palmer, one of the trustees of the Cheviot Estate, for what he considered good and sufficient reasons—because, as trustee, he wanted payment made in gold: he wanted gold for certain private reasons; but no doubt at all was cast upon the Government cheque.

Mr. TAYLOR was astonished at any honourable gentleman appearing to question the absolute security of the Government, or casting any doubt upon a Government cheque.

Mr. WARD said, in reply to the honourable member for Mataura, that the money paid out of the Treasury for this purpose was not shown on the estimates because it was not necessary. If the honourable member would refer to section 15 of "The Land and Income Assessment Act Amendment Act, 1892," he would find there was authority there to carry out such undertakings as these: in fact, it was specially provided that it might be done without a special appropriation. The Land- and Income-tax Department, having purchased the Cheviot Estate under the Act, it became necessary

Mr. T. Mackenzie

that the money should be paid out of the Treasury.

Vote, £11,596, agreed to.

CLASS VI.—CUSTOMS AND MARINE.

Vote, Customs offices and services, £32,007, agreed to.

Customs: Miscellaneous services, £2,760.

Mr. MITCHELSON asked, with reference to the item "Bonus on exportation of canned and cured fish, £700," whether it was the intention to extend this bounty for a number of years or for two years.

Mr. WARD said it was provided for last year, and the period for bonuses had some years to run, and it was not necessary to extend it this year.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked where the item of the salary for the Customs expert came in.

Mr. WARD said it had been passed already. It was placed in the estimates as it had always been. There was no particular reason for not setting forth the salary. The reason for the course, he thought, originally was that very many amounts were recovered as the result of this officer being employed, and it was better that the actual recoveries should be kept in the department, and, that being so, he was in an entirely different position from any other officer, and it was not necessary to put his salary down as a particular item.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said this salary was clouded over in the same manner in last year's estimates, so that members did not know where it came in. Under the previous Government the name of the officer appeared, with the salary attached.

Mr. WARD said that was not so.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the Atkinson Government showed the item; and if the item had been particularised he (Mr. Mackenzie) would have moved a reduction in it.

Mr. RHODES asked if the Government would consider the advisability of putting iron standards for fencing among the articles which should be admitted duty-free.

Mr. WARD said that would require to be considered when the whole question of the tariff was being dealt with. He would take a note of the suggestion.

Vote, £2,760, agreed to.

Marine and harbours, £18,907.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished for an explanation with regard to the item, "Hire and working-expenses of dredge for New Plymouth Harbour, £1,170." Last year a vote was passed for the same service, and it was reduced by £1 as an instruction that no more money was to be spent on dredge in New Plymouth Harbour. Then, at a later period, a vote of £1,000 was brought down in the supplementary estimates, and it was not unnaturally challenged by honourable members as being apparently in contravention of the understanding come to that no more money should be spent. However, that £1,000 ultimately passed by a majority of twenty-seven to sixteen, with the distinct promise on the part of the Acting-Premier (Mr. Seddon) that the £1,000 would

cover all expenses up to the return of the dredge, and that this would be the final vote. Why, then, did the vote again appear?

Mr. WARD said the dredge had not been sent to New Plymouth a second time, neither had the work she was doing last year been prolonged after the period to which the honourable gentleman referred. The amount involved in the dredging of New Plymouth Harbour was such as required another appropriation to be taken. If the honourable member looked at the expenditure of last year he would find that the actual amount of the expenditure was £3,691, as against £3,999, authority for which was taken. It was necessary to pay for the work that was in hand. There was no further obligation taken by the Government, and the amount that was asked for here was really to pay for work that was in hand.

Mr. BUCHANAN said this explanation was only playing with words, in view of the assurance from the Premier, which had been read out by the leader of the Opposition, that no further expenditure would be incurred. The Premier last year gave a distinct assurance that no further money than the £1,000 voted in the supplementary estimates would be expended on this work.

Mr. WARD said it was not unlikely that the amount placed on the estimates this year represented the cost of the return of the dredge to the place from which it was brought, and that, of course, would have to be provided for. The Premier, in speaking last year of the £1,000, referred, of course, to the actual expenditure; but, in addition to that, the cost of the return of the dredge would have to be provided for, and he did not think the Premier committed any breach of faith when he indicated that nothing further than this £1,000 would be required for actual expenditure on the work then in hand.

Sir J. HALL said that referred to October last year, and from that time till March was a period of six months. Did the Treasurer wish them to understand that during this six months the work could not be brought to an end? He could not conceive that to be possible. The Treasurer did not seem to be quite as well posted up in the facts as he might be on a future occasion, and therefore it might be convenient to omit this item at present. He would move, with the view of giving effect to the promise made to the House last session, that this amount be struck out.

Mr. SEDDON could explain the matter. The pledge which the Government had given the House had been religiously kept; but what happened was this: According to the terms of the contract they had to give back the dredge in the same condition as they got it. When it was put on the slip, prior to being returned to the Oamaru Board, a surveyor was put on it, who reported that it would take some £600 or £700 to put the dredge and machinery in the same condition as it was in when hired. He (Mr. Seddon) disputed that, and the Government consulted their own Engineer, and the amount ultimately fixed was £528. Then, they

had been unable to get the "Hinemoa" to take the dredge away immediately after the session, and, as they had to pay the rent while it was at New Plymouth, it had been considered that it was as well to go on working while they had to pay £100 a month rent. The great item, however, was the £528 for repairs. The Government had done their best to stop all further expense.

Sir J. HALL asked whether the Government were responsible for getting the dredge into such a condition that it took £500 to repair it.

Mr. SEDDON said the Engineer had stated that it was ordinary wear-and-tear.

Mr. E. M. SMITH did not wish to interfere with the honourable gentleman in drawing attention to this sum, but he thought the explanation of the Minister was satisfactory. He would remark that had the country dealt fairly with the New Plymouth people in the matter of the 200,000 acres of land which had been taken away from them they would not have had to come to the House for assistance. He would also point out that when the honourable member for Auckland City moved last year for a reduction of the vote by £1 he was unaware that the vote was not a new one.

Mr. MOORE thought that the Committee had been badly treated in reference to this matter. All through last session a certain amount had been brought down on the ordinary estimates for the Harbour Board, and a motion to reduce it by £1 had been made as an indication to the Government not to spend any more money in this direction; yet on the supplementary estimates there was another £1,000 brought down, and now there was another sum of £1,170.

Mr. BUCHANAN suggested that it was advisable to appeal to the honourable member for New Plymouth as well as to the Premier for an assurance that no more money should be spent in this direction, as it appeared that the Government could not close this expenditure without the honourable gentleman's permission.

Mr. W. KELLY wished to draw attention to one or two other items. He wished for some explanation with regard to the sums of £20 each put down for the examiners of masters and mates at Auckland, Lyttelton, and Dunedin, who had been previously receiving £125 and £100 each. Had an arrangement been made that they were to work for £20 each?

Mr. WARD said it had been decided to change the whole system, and the services of the late examiners had been dispensed with in the interests of economy, and under the new arrangements the expense was not necessary, and the amounts set down were found to be ample for the services rendered.

Mr. W. KELLY asked if these gentlemen agreed to accept payment of £20 for their services.

Mr. WARD said other Government officers discharged the duties—an arrangement which was found to work satisfactorily.

Mr. RICHARDSON said, that being the sums had been improperly stated.

Mr. Seddon

The ordinary course should have been followed. In cases where an officer was in receipt of another salary the amount was set down with the addition of "also £— as —," giving the amount and designation of his other appointment, so that the total amount payable in each case should be disclosed.

Mr. WARD said he would consider whether it should be set down in that way next year.

Mr. W. KELLY would like to have some explanation in regard to the items, "Repairs to wharves at Mangapai, Maungakarama, and Parua Bay in Whangarei Harbour, £150;" and "Mongonui Wharf, grant-in-aid for repairs, £160."

Mr. WARD said there was a condition attached that the County Council should take over the wharf in question, and in future discharge the duties which formerly had fallen on the Government.

Mr. W. KELLY said, with reference to the item, "Buoys and beacons, Gisborne (to be recovered from the Harbour Board), £120," he would move to omit the words "(to be recovered from the Harbour Board)."

Mr. ALLEN wanted to ask, with regard to the examiners of masters and mates, whether they had been considered as Civil servants, and were entitled to a retiring-allowance, or any pension.

Mr. WARD said they had not been considered Civil servants because they were not Government employés. For instance, the examiner at Dunedin was in receipt of a salary as Harbourmaster, and was now secretary to underwriters. He was not a Civil servant, and was not entitled to compensation or a pension.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON wished to draw attention to the fact that the lighthouse-keepers were faring worse than they used to do, in having their leave reduced from fourteen days to ten. Their duties were of an exceptional nature, and he thought they should receive more consideration. They were isolated from the public, and had no way of bringing their grievances before even the department.

Mr. WARD said the Government intended to reorganize the Marine Department, and make some changes which would be beneficial to the service, and the Government thought that some of the lighthouse-keepers might receive consideration in the way suggested by the honourable gentleman. He thought the service would be improved very materially by the changes which were contemplated.

Sir J. HALL asked if it was correct that the Government were going to amalgamate the Marine with some other department.

Mr. WARD said that was quite correct.

Sir J. HALL thought the House should have an opportunity of considering the matter.

Mr. WARD said what was intended to be done was this: Formerly the Customs and Marine were under one control, and a division took place some years ago. The Government had resolved to put the Marine Department under the control of the head of the Customs Department, and there was no doubt economies

could be carried out by reason of this amalgamation.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be omitted."

AYES, 12.

Blake	Mackenzie, T.	Rolleston.
Bruce	Mitchelson	Tellers.
Hall-Jones	Moore	Allen
Hutchison, G.	Palmer	Rhodes.
Lake		

NOES, 21.

Carnocross	McGowan	Thompson, R.
Carroll	McLean	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Meredith	Ward
Fraser	Mills, C. H.	Willis.
Hogg	Seddon	Tellers.
Houston	Smith, E. M.	Buick
Kelly, J.	Taylor	Joyce.
Kelly, W.		

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Buchanan	Shera
Buckland	Mackintosh
Duthie	Reeves
Fergus	Pinkerton
Harkness	Stout
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	McKenzie, J.
Mills, J.	Tanner
Richardson	Parata
Swan	Dawson
Valentine	Smith, W. C.
Wright.	McGuire.

Majority against, 9.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £18,907, agreed to.

Marine: Miscellaneous services, £9,997.

Mr. W. KELLY moved, That the item, "Buoys and beacons, Gisborne (to be recovered from the Harbour Board), £120," be omitted.

Mr. MEREDITH asked what the Government intended to do with regard to the "Stella."

Mr. WARD said that if the Government could get a buyer at a fair price they would be only too glad to sell her.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved, That the item "Buoys and beacons, Gisborne," be reduced by £1, as an indication to the Government that they should give this service free. Why should Taranaki get £5,000 this year free, also a quarter of the receipts from all land sold in the Taranaki Provincial District, whilst Gisborne got no land revenue and only £120, and was called upon to refund that?

Mr. W. KELLY withdrew his motion.

Mr. T. Mackenzie's motion negatived, and vote, £9,997, agreed to.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ACCOUNT.

Vote, Chargeable on Government Insurance Account, £62,188, agreed to.

PUBLIC TRUST ACCOUNT.

Chargeable on Public Trust Office Expenses Account, £8,076.

Mr. RHODES asked whether this department

was paying for itself. Last year there was a loss of £4,000 on it.

Mr. WARD said there was a prospect of its paying better. It was doing much more business, in consequence of the legislation passed last year, and the department was so economically administered that he hoped it would soon pay.

Mr. MCLEAN wished to ask whether the lady Shorthand-writer and Type-writer was paid at the same ratio as a mail employé, and whether the Treasurer would say whether that would apply to other branches.

Mr. WARD replied that ladies were employed in some departments where certain suitable work could be found for them. It was only right to say that in some departments women had not been able to do anything like the work that a man could do, and therefore he did not think that the same salary should be paid them. The salary would be regulated by the actual amount of work done, and the only assurance he could give was that whenever a lady was engaged in any particular work she would be paid accordingly.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked whether he was to understand that if a woman did the same work as a man she would not receive the same amount of salary.

Mr. WARD said that experience generally showed that in certain branches women did not do the same amount of work as men, and therefore they could not expect the same salaries: if they did the same amount of work they would receive the same salaries.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON noticed that under the heading "Administration of the West Coast Settlement Reserves" there was an item of £192 for the presiding officer at recent meetings. He wished to know whether this officer was the Mr. Williams whose name had been mentioned in the House on a previous day, and, if so, what was intended to be done with reference to that officer.

Mr. WARD said it was the same Mr. Williams who was referred to a few days ago. He might take the opportunity of informing the House that when the late Colonial Treasurer visited the locality, before Mr. Williams was appointed, the Natives refused to discuss the matters he went there to consider until he had given an assurance that Mr. Williams would be appointed interpreter.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked what authority the honourable gentleman had for making that statement.

Mr. WARD said he had the authority of the officer in charge of the department.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said, then that was not in accordance with the views of some who claimed to know something of the feeling of the Natives on the Coast.

Mr. WARD could absolutely assure the honourable gentleman that it was correct, and there were records to prove it. The place where the meeting was held was Patea, and the Natives declined to receive the representations of the late Colonial Treasurer unless Mr. Williams was appointed interpreter.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said no doubt Mr. Williams had certain friends amongst the Natives, and they thought it desirable that he should act as interpreter at that meeting. What he (Mr. Hutchison) would like to know was, whether the Minister had come to any decision as to employing Mr. Williams in the future.

Mr. WARD said that under the Act the control of the Public Trust Office was placed under the direction of the Public Trustee, who was entirely responsible for the internal management of the department. Since this question had been raised he had referred to the Public Trustee as to the qualifications of Mr. Williams, and was assured that he was giving the greatest satisfaction. He did not think, himself, that if a man were discharging his duties satisfactorily he should be removed from a position simply because there had been something in the past, but which had now been cleared up. This officer had been appointed by the late Administration to the position of interpreter, and that was a very clear indication that those who appointed him did not regard him as being a man who was not entitled to the position, which was a position of trust as between Natives and Europeans.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the Premier had promised, when the question was before the House some days ago, to look over Mr. Williams's papers. The Colonial Treasurer had stated that the late Government were responsible for his appointment; but he (Mr. Mitchelson) had absolutely refused to appoint him, as he did not consider that he was a fit person to hold any position under the Government. The Colonial Treasurer stated that he was not responsible for the department; but Parliament had to vote the necessary funds to carry on the department, and, that being so, it was the duty of the Government to see that any man who was placed in such a position by the Public Trustee was a fit person to hold it. If the Minister would take the trouble to examine the papers in the Native Department he would come to the same opinion with regard to Mr. Williams.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said that the remarks of the Minister deserved serious notice. Although the Public Trustee administered the department, the Minister must be responsible to the House. Parliament had made a change a few years ago, making the Public Trustee a departmental and not a parliamentary officer. The Minister must take the responsibility in that House for the employment of Mr. Williams.

Mr. WARD would point out that the honourable gentleman was entirely wrong. The Public Trustee was responsible for the general administration of the department under the Act, and there should be no interference with his administration by a Minister. That was the position in which the Public Trustee was placed.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON thought that this was too serious a matter to be discussed at three

o'clock in the morning, and he would therefore move to report progress, in order that the true positions of the Public Trustee and of the Minister might be ascertained. According to the Colonial Treasurer there was no Minister responsible for the department, and the House had better have an opportunity of considering that statement.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked if the Colonial Treasurer was present some days ago when the discussion on Mr. Williams took place.

Mr. WARD said Yes. He might say that the inquiry that the Premier said would take place would be held. Very little time had elapsed, and reasonable time must be given before the inquiry could take place.

Mr. SEDDON would suggest to the honourable member for Waitotara not to press his amendment. The Act stated that the Public Trustee held office on the same terms and conditions as any ordinary officer of the Civil Service. There had been a misconception as to the Colonial Treasurer's remarks.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the misconception had been on the part of the Colonial Treasurer. The Minister was responsible for the administration of the Act.

Mr. SEDDON said that the appointment of Williams as an interpreter was signed by the Hon. Mr. Fergus, in the absence of the Native Minister.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he, as Native Minister, had repeatedly refused to recommend Mr. Williams for appointment.

Mr. ROLLESTON did not think that two wrongs made a right. The House should know what was the status of the Public Trustee. The Minister had said that he was not responsible for appointments of this kind, but Parliament was quite justified in calling upon him to explain the department's action. It was not the right thing that a man with a stain upon his character should be put into a position of trust. The department required a complete overhaul; and, besides, its responsibilities were proposed to be increased under a number of the Government proposals. The Minister would do well to give an opportunity of having the subject fully dealt with.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that, with a view of testing the question, he would move, That the item be reduced by £192, the sum paid to Williams. He did not consider him a fit person to hold any position in the colony.

Mr. WARD said he would repeat the statement that the Public Trustee was alone responsible for the internal administration of the department. It would be a very bad thing if any Minister could deal with the private affairs of people put into the hands of the Public Trustee.

Mr. MITCHELSON did not question the right of the Public Trustee to employ any individual who might be qualified for such a position. At the same time, the Public Trustee was responsible to Parliament, and Parliament was responsible for the payment of salaries to officers in the department. He did not consider Williams a fit person to hold the position

of interpreter, and he had absolutely refused to have him licensed as such.

Mr. WARD said it was perfectly true that the *Gazette* notice of Williams's appointment was signed by Mr. Fergus, in the absence of the Native Minister. He was appointed by the Atkinson Government, and the honourable member would be surprised to hear that the letter of appointment was signed by Sir Harry Atkinson. The Native Minister, who had charge of the department, was not in Wellington at the time.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said it did not matter one farthing who appointed this man. It had been stated on the authority of the honourable member for Eden, who was Native Minister at the time, that this man was utterly untrustworthy, and was not fit to hold any position of trust in the Government service.

Mr. WARD would suggest that the honourable member for Eden should withdraw his motion and allow the item to pass, and for this reason: The Government had given an assurance that an inquiry would be held, but if that inquiry proved that this man should not be there, and he was removed, the item would still be required, for somebody else would have to be employed. Consequently, what would be gained by striking out the item?

Mr. PALMER said by the motion of the honourable member for Eden he was asked to vote whether this man should be discharged or not, without knowing anything about the charges. If the Minister undertook to have an inquiry made into this man's character, and if this officer were discharged supposing he were found to be unfit, surely that was sufficient.

Mr. ALLEN said a certain specific charge had been made against this man, and it could not be answered. The charge was that he had defrauded the Natives of over £3,000, and the case was not proceeded with because the man became bankrupt. The whole thing was investigated by a Committee, and the facts were as he had stated. He would suggest that the honourable member for Eden should withdraw his motion, and move to reduce the vote by a nominal sum, as an indication to Ministers that this man was unfit to occupy the position he was placed in. There could be no question about that, on the evidence of the honourable member for Eden, who was Native Minister at the time, and who refused to appoint this man. The Premier, the other day, said the question was of such serious import that he intended to have it investigated at once. He hoped that course would be pursued. They had had quite enough of these dealings in Native lands by men whose characters were not sufficiently clean to deal with them. This was not the only instance, and it was quite time men of this kind were out of the employment of the Government altogether.

Mr. R. THOMPSON thought he could suggest a way to get out of the difficulty. There was no doubt at all that a very serious charge had been made against this man by the honourable member for the Western Maori

District (Mr. Taipua). Charges made on the floor of that House could not be passed over lightly, and he thought the least the Government could do would be to suspend this officer until there had been an inquiry. If that were done he did not see why this vote should not be passed. He certainly thought that no officer should be in the employ of the Government with such a serious charge hanging over his head.

Mr. SEDDON said that when the Government brought down their estimates they, of course, included this item; but the Government knew nothing more than that this officer was in the employ of the Public Trust Office as interpreter, and the first time he became aware of the matter in connection with Williams was at the time of the inquiry into the question of the litigation with regard to the West Coast Settlement Reserves. There were, of course, two factors there—namely, the Natives and the Europeans—and there was, no doubt, very strong feeling. Then he heard the statement made by Mr. Taipua the other day; but it should not be forgotten that the very same charge had been inquired into by a Committee, when witnesses were examined, but with no result.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Committee had recommended legal proceedings, as far as he remembered. He was a member of that Committee. There were legal proceedings to recover the money, but, through some technicality, the money could not be recovered.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He went bankrupt.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the opinion of the Committee was very decided as against Williams, whatever the technical result of the lawsuit might have been.

Mr. SEDDON said they would see whether the Committee recommended that legal proceedings should be taken. If neither civil nor criminal proceedings were taken at the time, it would be a very difficult thing now, after such a lapse of time, for the Government to institute any inquiry. But it was the duty of the Government to see that none but respectable persons were in the public service, and, after the statements which had been made, the Government would look into the matter. That would be done; and the passing of this vote would be taken on that understanding. But it would be unfair to strike out the item in view of what he had said, and, of course, the Government could not accept that position. There were facts within the knowledge of the honourable member for Eden that the House knew nothing of, and it was unfair to ask them to vote upon the question, and he did not think the honourable gentleman ought to put members in that position.

Mr. MITCHELSON said he informed the Premier during the discussion some weeks ago that the whole of the information was in the Native Department. The whole of the papers were there, and the honourable gentleman could long ere this have made himself thoroughly familiar with the case.

Mr. WARD said, if the honourable gentleman opposed this man acting as interpreter, and after his return to Wellington found he had been appointed, why did he not get his colleagues to dismiss him?

Mr. MITCHELSON said that was not a question he was prepared to answer. He would have moved that the item be struck out if it had not been for the statement of the Colonial Treasurer in regard to the appointment of officers in the Public Trust Office, with which he said the Government had nothing to do. Parliament was responsible for the payment of the salaries, and he thought the Minister ought, in justice to Parliament, to see that the Public Trustee did not retain in his employ any person who should not be there.

Mr. WARD was understood to say that the honourable gentleman had had an assurance that that would be done.

Mr. SEDDON would merely point out to the honourable member for Eden that Sir Harry Atkinson did not hold the same opinion in regard to this matter which the honourable member for Eden held.

Mr. MOORE said, after the charges which had been made against this officer, there ought to be an inquiry held. Evidently there was documentary evidence in the Native Department which the Minister might have laid his hand on, and he ought to have been in a position that night to make a definite statement to the House on the question. He thought the least the Minister could have done was to have stated distinctly that he would have the matter inquired into, and that if the charges were proved he would have this man dismissed.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he did not intend to speak further. This question was a very disagreeable one, but he did think that Ministers were not doing right in not postponing these estimates, and then on a future day making a statement in regard to this particular appointment. And they should also give honourable members an opportunity of reading the report, which, he thought, had only just come down from the Public Trust Office, so that they might understand the thing more fully. He had a very strong opinion as to the Public Trust Office, but he would not go into the matter at that late hour of the night.

Motion to report progress negatived.

Mr. MEREDITH asked when the Government intended to place upon the table the report under "The Unclaimed Land Act, 1892." Would they place a statement upon the table as to land taken over by the department during the past year?

Mr. WARD said if the honourable gentleman looked at the Public Trustee's report he would find that there were five hundred-odd sections referred to as coming under this Act.

Mr. MITCHELSON said, after the statement made by the Premier, he proposed to withdraw his amendment, conditionally on his undertaking to look through the papers in connection with Mr. Williams, and, if he considered the statements made in the House borne out by the facts disclosed in the papers,

that this officer should not be longer kept in the employment of the Public Trustee.

Mr. SEDDON said he had stated that he would look into the matter, and he would acquaint the honourable member with the result. He would inform the honourable gentleman on the first opportunity as to the result of the inquiries.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that what he wanted was an assurance from the Premier that, if he were satisfied that the charges made against Williams had been proved, he would see that the man was not further employed in the Trust Office or any other Government office. He thought that a fair question to ask. Of course, if the charges were not proved the man would continue to be employed.

Mr. SEDDON thought it would be unfair to ask him to go the length the honourable gentleman did. It was not the wish of the Government to have any undesirable officers in the service of the colony. He had said so before, and he said so now; and in this case it was his duty to have an inquiry made, and the Minister in charge of the department would no doubt ask for an explanation from this officer in connection with this matter and the whole of the circumstances surrounding it. He would himself look into it, and if they did not think there was sufficient reason for retiring the officer he would be continued in his employment.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said it simply meant this: The Premier would not promise to dismiss this officer even if he found the charges proved against him. He thought they should have a division on this vote. They knew, of course, they would not win it. A number of the Government supporters who were in the lobby would come trooping in, and would support the Government, no matter what the merits were. He hoped the honourable gentleman would push his amendment to a division. At any rate, that division would be a protest against the retention in the employment of the Government of this officer, against whom it was alleged that he was guilty of practices contrary to the principles of honesty.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the negativing of a proposal of this kind was so serious a thing that he hoped they would not go to a vote. He meant there would be a number of gentlemen who would vote on the question not in a judicial mind at all. It was a question for a judicial decision, and he would be sorry to see the question negatived for that reason. He thought it would be discreditable to the House. What they wanted was an absolute assurance that there would be a judicial inquiry.

Mr. WARD really thought that it was necessary for him to say again that the honourable member for Clutha had just now again made a statement which was contrary to fact, and he did not think a statement of that sort should be allowed to go unchallenged. The Government had already indicated that they would inquire into the circumstances connected with this officer. That statement was made some days ago, and the same assurance had been

given that night. When the honourable member for Clutha stated, as he had just now, that the Government declined to hold an inquiry, or to suspend this officer against whom these charges had been made, he had simply to say that the honourable member was stating what was contrary to fact; and, in addition to that, he overlooked this important fact in his desire to accuse the Government of retaining this officer: that he was appointed by the late Government, and remained as interpreter, during the time of the former Administration, in the employ of the Government, in the same position that he occupied now. He was appointed by the late Administration, and, as a matter of fact, after the Minister in charge of the department knew of the charges brought against him, no inquiry was held into the circumstances by the late Government; and, in further connection with the officer who was now accused of not being entitled to remain in the employ of the Government, and whom they were asked to suspend, the Minister of the former Administration in charge of this department did nothing of the kind they were now asked to do. When the honourable member for Clutha accused the Government of retaining the services of this officer he should, in fairness, have also stated the other side of the question. It would seem as if the honourable gentleman had some political purpose in view.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the honourable gentleman stated that for political purposes he was anxious to have some inquiry made into the charges made against this officer. He had simply made a charge of this sort: that the Premier refused to give any assurance to the honourable member for Eden that he would suspend this officer if he found the charge brought against him to be true. No sophistry on the part of the Colonial Treasurer, nor any attempt on his part to show that he (Mr. Mackenzie) was going into this matter for political purposes, would cause him (Mr. Mackenzie) to take a different view from that he had already given expression to; and it came with a very bad grace from a Minister to suggest that it was for political purposes that he asked the Premier to give the assurance that he would suspend this officer of his department if he found him to be guilty of such conduct as they had heard imputed to him in the House.

Mr. WARD asked why he was not suspended by the previous Government.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE had nothing to do with that. If that Government gave to a man an interpreter's license, did that bind a succeeding Government to give him a permanent appointment in the service? The position was the most inconsistent he had ever heard defended on the floor of that House. However, even in that statement he believed the honourable gentleman was not correct. He believed this person was never in the service of the country at the time referred to. Williams obtained a license from the Atkinson Government, but he never was an officer in that Government's employment, but now he had been appointed to a position of trust by the present

Government. The fact was this: There were certain men in the Government service into whose conduct the Government would not inquire, because they were of the right colour, and there were other men into whose public and private affairs they were continually searching, and they had a band of spies parading the public offices to discover faults.

Mr. SHERA thought they must not forget that this improper person got into the public service because the Atkinson Government gazetted him as a licensed interpreter. That gave him a character, and it was quite natural for the Public Trust Office to be misled. He thought it was quite sufficient for the Premier to assure them that the matter would be inquired into and a proper decision come to.

Mr. TAYLOR was astonished at the honourable member for Clutha insinuating that the Postmaster-General was speaking from political motives. Such insinuations were degrading. The late Native Minister was absolutely responsible for this appointment. It was true that his deputy made the appointment in his absence, but the honourable gentleman did nothing to annul it. He now wanted to hang the man before he was judged. The Premier had given a fair assurance to the House.

Mr. MITCHELSON had said he was willing to withdraw the amendment on the assurance of the Premier, and he said so again.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON wished to explain, for the information of those honourable members who desired to look into the matter, that when the Joint Committee was dealing in 1890 with the question of the West Coast Settlement Reserves, Mr. Williams was examined before that Committee, and was cross-examined by counsel for the leaseholders. Honourable members would there see the explanation Mr. Williams himself gave with reference to the charges made against him.

Amendment withdrawn.

Vote, £8,076, agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The House divided on the question, "That the House do now adjourn."

AYES, 23.

Blake	Joyce	Shera
Bruce	Lake	Taylor
Buick	Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.
Carroll	McGowan	Ward
Fraser	Meredith	Willis.
Harkness	Mills, C. H.	Tellers.
Hogg	Mitchelson	Carnross
Houston	Seddon	Smith, E. M.

NOES, 10.

Allen	Moore	
Duncan	Rhodes	Tellers.
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Kelly, J.
McLean	Thompson, R.	Palmer.

Majority for, 13.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to four o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 16th August, 1898.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Reading—
Oamaru Loans Consolidation Bill—Sunday
Trading.The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at
half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Gore Electric Lighting Bill, Juries Bill.

SECOND READING.

Wellington City Empowering Bill.

THIRD READING.

Agricultural and Pastoral Societies Bill.

OAMARU LOANS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said the Bill was intended, as its title showed, to consolidate into one several loans that had been from time to time raised by the Corporation of the Borough of Oamaru. The seven loans proposed to be consolidated were enumerated in the First Schedule to the Bill. These loans had been raised under various Acts of Parliament and ordinances of the Provincial Council of Otago. They amounted in all to £178,000, he thought. Unfortunately for the Corporation, and he supposed also for the colony as a whole, the Corporation had found itself in the position of being unable to fulfil its obligations to the bondholders, who held securities representing the loans mentioned. In point of fact, the Corporation had made default in payment of interest, and it was that default that led to action being taken by the bondholders in England. Meetings had been held by these bondholders, circulars having been issued inviting them to attend for the purpose of considering the position of the loans and securities, and the position also of the persons holding these bonds. The result was that a Committee was appointed to watch over the interests of the bondholders; and, after various meetings between this Committee and a representative appointed to act on behalf of the Corporation of Oamaru, a scheme was arranged, which was set forth in the Bill. The preamble of the Bill showed that a large majority of the people who held bonds representing those loans had given their consent to this arrangement, and there was, so far as he was aware, no opposition on the part of those who had not signified their consent. He understood the position of those who had not actually consented was merely that they took no action one way or the other. They had been invited, the same as others, to attend a meeting, but whether they attended it or not he did not know. They had neither signified assent to nor dissent from the arrangement. The position then was that, with regard to Loan No. 1 in the schedule—the loan of £25,000—bondholders representing £23,800 had

signified their consent. As regarded the second loan, holders to the value of £3,000 had signified their consent. As regarded the third loan, all the bondholders had signified their consent. As to the Waterworks Loan No. 1, of £60,000, holders representing £48,000 had signified their consent. As to the loan of £50,000, holders representing £43,000 had signified their consent. As to the £10,000 for waterworks, all had consented; and as to the £14,000, all had consented. So that it would be seen that a very large majority of the bondholders had signified their consent to this arrangement, and that, he thought, might be taken as very strong evidence that the arrangement sought to be carried out by this Bill was one which was in the interests of the bondholders as a whole. Now, the terms of the arrangement were principally these: What was called a consolidated loan was to be issued for the total amount of those various loans, and the consolidated debentures were to be given to the present bondholders in exchange for the debentures for the existing loans, and, as a necessary consequence, it was declared in section 11 of the Bill before the Council that the existing loans were to be invalid for any purpose except that of being exchanged for consolidated debentures of an equal amount. Then, there was an important alteration made in the rate of interest, which honourable members would notice was somewhat high in respect of some of the loans, the first being 7 per cent., the second 5 per cent., the third 5 per cent., the next 7 per cent., the next 7 per cent., and the others 6 per cent. Under the arrangement proposed to be given effect to, it would be seen that the interest on the consolidated loan was to be 5 per cent. In consideration for that concession the borough had agreed, as would be seen by section 3, that, for the purpose of carrying out the agreement, the Corporation should issue consolidated debentures for the sum of £175,000, to be charged upon the revenues, and also upon the borough gasworks, upon the waterworks, and upon the profits of the endowments of the Corporation. Then, also, by section 9,—

“The Council shall, for the purpose of meeting the interest payable upon the moneys secured by any consolidated debentures, strike and make a rate of four shillings in the pound upon all rateable property in the borough, and such rate shall be and be deemed to be a special rate within the meaning of the said Act, and, save where it is herein otherwise expressly provided, all the provisions contained in the said Act, and any Act or Acts amending or substituted for the same, relating to special rates, and specially sections one hundred and forty-four and one hundred and forty-five of the said Act, and any provisions of any Act or Acts amending or substituted for those sections, shall apply to such special rate; and the Council shall in each year levy so much of the said special rate as shall be sufficient to pay interest upon the consolidated debentures.”

Now, the bondholders evidently considered that it would be an advantage to them to

have one consolidated loan for the different loans, and to have security for all the loans, and a mortgage really over all the assets belonging to the Corporation, for that was what he understood section 3 of the Bill to give. It seemed to give the bondholders a mortgage or charge over all assets of whatever kind. This was obviously an advantage to the bondholders as a whole, because the bondholders had only limited securities. The security, for instance, as to the General Loan No. 1 was a general rate of 1s. 3d. in the pound, and the same with regard to No. 2. The security for the gas loan was the profit on the gas-manufacture. The security for the Waterworks Loan No. 1 was a rate of 1s. 3d. in the pound on an annual valuation; for No. 2 it was 1s. in the pound on an annual rate on town sections; and for No. 3, 6d. in the pound on annual valuation; and the extension-loan security was a rate upon motive-power charged on the refrigerating company. The bondholders had considered that matter very carefully, one might be quite sure, and they had come to the conclusion that what the Corporation proposed to give them by this Bill was to their advantage. A difficulty, however, arose in this way: In spite of the fact that such a large majority of the bondholders had consented to this arrangement, there were a few who had made no sign one way or the other, and that was what made it necessary for the bondholders and the Corporation to apply to the Legislature for power to sanction the carrying-out of that arrangement. The agreement which had already been executed by the Corporation and the representatives of the bondholders was of course not binding upon the non-consenting bondholders. The object of the Bill was to enable the Corporation to implement and carry out the terms of this agreement. No doubt it was to be regretted that such a thing should be necessary, but he apprehended that what the Council had now to consider was, what was really the best course to settle the matter, and whether it was not advisable that the Legislature should sanction the fulfilment of this agreement. Although he was not able to mention precisely any case in which the same process had been adopted, other honourable members would be familiar with cases that were very nearly analogous. He understood it was almost the uniform practice in the Old Country when bonds were issued by public bodies and companies to indorse upon the debentures a condition that resolutions with reference to the bonds or debentures or securities, if passed by a majority of the shareholders, should be binding on the minority. They also knew that in the case of companies in liquidation the Court, under "The Companies Act, 1862," had power to summon meetings of creditors and to adopt the decisions at such meetings. Under section 136 of the same Act, arrangements between a company in voluntary liquidation and its creditors could be made, and those arrangements were binding on the creditors if assented to by three-fourths of them. Then, by the Act of 33 and 34 Vict., c. 104, "The Joint Stock Companies Arrangement Act, 1870," com-

promises and arrangements sanctioned by a majority of three-fourths of the creditors at a meeting were made binding on the minority. Then, again, the same thing had been done a good many years since in the case of the Chatham and Dover Railway, the affairs of which had got into confusion, and arbitrators were appointed to investigate matters and make awards dealing with and binding the various debenture-holders, bondholders, and shareholders. A somewhat similar arrangement was made in the case of the Milford Docks Company by legislation, so that it appeared that there was nothing startling or unusual in the case before the Council. He thought the fact that the debenture-holders in the present case, up to such a very large number, had thought it best in their own interests to assent to the arrangement might be taken as a very strong indication that it was best for the debenture-holders as a whole. He understood that there was a good deal of dissatisfaction in Oamaru on the ground that the arrangement proposed to be carried out was really more advantageous to the bondholders than it should be, and some people expressed a doubt as to whether the Corporation would be able to carry it out. However, this arrangement had been entered into in due form by deed, although it was not absolutely binding in consequence of the minority not having fallen in with it. Well, it must be carried if the Legislature saw fit to sanction it. That was really all that this Bill asked to be done. He understood the practice in dealing with private Bills, after the general scheme of the Bill had been explained, was to take a debate upon the motion for the adoption of the report of the Committee. He thought it was unnecessary for him to give any further explanation of or justification for this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that, whatever might be the practice in regard to the passing of private Bills, it was perfectly open to any member of the Council to express an opinion upon the general principles of any private Bill, and there were several reasons why on this occasion it was desirable to take some discussion at the outset. Coming to the Bill, there could be no question as to the accuracy of the facts as set forth. He understood the proposal was simply this: An agreement of a provisional character had been entered into between the Oamaru Borough Council and the bondholders to the extent, as stated by his honourable friend, of a very large proportion of the bondholders. That proportion was undoubtedly very large, but there was still £18,000 or £19,000 not represented in the consent given to that agreement. It would be unfair to assume that those bondholders who had not come into that agreement were dissentients. His honourable friend had stated, he believed perfectly correctly, that there was nothing to show whether these were favourable to or were against that arrangement, or to the agreement which had been made, as he understood, by a majority of the bondholders holding a majority of the bonds. His honourable friend

had quoted certain cases which seemed to him to justify what he was pleased to consider a very slight departure from the usual practice. He (Mr. Stevens) called the attention of the Council to this fact: that those were cases where bonds had been issued under an agreement, as stated by his honourable friend, that the voice of the majority should be binding on the other bondholders. They had here at the outset a totally different condition of affairs. Every one was entitled to be paid in full. A case was mentioned by his honourable friend of the creditors at a meeting in a bankruptcy estate; but that was not a case in point, inasmuch as those who gave credit were quite aware beforehand of the provisions of the Bankruptcy Act governing that question. It was simply proposed in this case, at the instance of a majority of the bondholders, and at the instance of the Borough Council in agreement with those bondholders, to ask the Legislature to decide for them what they were entitled to. The 11th clause of the Bill said that all such bonds as did not come in in common with others should be rendered by this Bill invalid, and the new bonds representing that interest were to be handed over to the Public Trustee to collect the interest from time to time and give the interest and the bonds sooner or later, if desired by the bondholder. That was the treatment of the interest of those persons. It was an act on the part of the Legislature simply of stepping in and telling them that the Legislature, in common with a majority of the bondholders and of the Oamaru Borough Council, considered that the interests of those persons who had come in were being properly conserved by that Bill. It might be perfectly true—he had no doubt it was so—that if the bondholders went into this arrangement they would be better off than if they stood out. But was it for the Legislature to deliberately pass an Act altering the position of those persons in relation to those bonds, and saying their bonds should be made invalid by this Bill, and that they had to take what the Legislature thought fit to give them? He submitted that a more dangerous proposition could not be made, and, if it was carried out, his own opinion was that those people would be entitled to ask the Government of this colony to give them their money. He would submit to honourable members that they themselves, within the last twenty-four hours, had been very deeply impressed with the necessity of not varying the position of property in the hands of bondholders. Only the previous afternoon the Council had it strongly impressed upon them that in no instance must they vary that position. To look back somewhat into the past, he would like honourable members to bear this in mind: What was the ground of complaint on the part of holders of the provincial bonds when they were consolidated? Why, it was that the colony had varied the security. Whether their contention was a correct one or not was a matter of opinion. In 1867 that was the main ground of objection—that they were varying the ground

Hon. Mr. Stevens

of security by passing the Act they were then passing. That, more than anything else, led to the steps which were taken and to the alteration of the measure which was proposed to be passed. Coming to a more recent period, the most recent strong case they had was that of the New Plymouth bonds. They had to look at the correspondence which reached them some time since from the Committee of Foreign Bondholders. They found there that the whole ground of their complaint, upon which they founded their claim against the colony, was that the security had—this was their assumption—been altered. Such an operation as was proposed in the Bill was one of the most complete and, he might say, the most violent operations it had been his misfortune to see proposed. He thought it only right to call attention to the circumstances, and to ask honourable members whether they were deliberately going to ratify a plan of this character in a light-hearted fashion. In his opinion, it was one of the most unsatisfactory proposals that it was possible to make. That it might be satisfactory locally to the people of Oamaru was a matter for their consideration: they might know better than he did. Whether the Borough Council had a right to enter into an agreement by which they largely altered the burdens and the conditions with regard to the borough loans of Oamaru was a matter on which he would not express any opinion at present. That was worthy of consideration; and, as regarded the proposal to deliberately take these people's bonds and declare them by Act of Parliament invalidated, and that, in obedience to the views of the majority of the number of bondholders and the Oamaru Borough Council, they should be compelled to take what the Council pleased to give them, appeared to him to be one of the most unsatisfactory and unsafe proposals he had ever heard of.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN asked the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill what he meant by the expression that it was doubtful if the Corporation would be able to carry out the scheme. If there was to be no finality in the matter it would have to be further considered.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR explained that it might be found that the terms offered by the Corporation were more favourable than they were justified in offering.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN thought, then, that it was a matter that would require to be looked into again by the Committee. It was very important to know whether there was any faith in the community specially interested as to the finality of the proposals—whether there was any certainty that the arrangement the ratification of which was now asked for would be carried out. He understood that the great majority of the bondholders had assented to the scheme, but not all of them. One objection raised by the Hon. Mr. Stevens—and he thought it was a very forcible one—was that the Bill did not propose to make this conversion with the consent of the bondholders,

but proposed to make it in the teeth of any objectors amongst the bondholders to the conversion. If to the doubts thus raised it was added—in what, he must say, were ominous words from the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill—that there was some doubt as to whether the Corporation would be able to carry out the scheme proposed, it placed the matter in a still more serious light before the Council. He thought the Bill ought not to be passed without being referred back to the Committee for further evidence.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE thought the Bill had been very well explained by the Hon. Mr. Stevens. The point mentioned he should not go back upon, but there were one or two others that might be noticed. First of all he could not think there could be any justice in paying interest at the rate of 5 per cent. when the Corporation were paying 7 per cent. He could not understand why they should go back upon the legislation. It was something on the Pennsylvanian-bonds principle. He thought the whole of the money ought to be paid to the debenture-holders. But apparently they had nothing to hope for from the Oamaru Corporation. He could not see what ground of justice there could be in attempting to appropriate this amount which ought to be paid to the bondholders. Another thing which ought to be mentioned was the clause referring to uniform rates. Upon what ground could the sinking funds, which really belonged to the debenture-holders, be appropriated in this manner? There was really no reason; because afterwards the debenture-holders, if they could not get anything more out of the Corporation, would have to make a financial bargain and be content to take 5 per cent., and he did not see why they should be deprived of the sinking funds. The question of the majority required careful consideration: though the minority was very small, he thought the Legislature should have some hesitation in saying that any person should accept bonds at a lower rate of interest. It was their duty to carry out the bargain, and he thought it was the duty of the Oamaru Corporation to do so. At any rate, if this were not done it would redound very little to the credit of the colony.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART thought the Bill required to be very carefully considered. So far as the debenture-holders were concerned, the Bill at first sight seemed to be a very fair solution of the difficulty that had taken place. With regard to those debenture-holders who had entered into this agreement, there could be no question that the Legislature should give effect to that agreement; but the only question was in regard to what might be termed the quiescent debenture-holders. He would like to know whether these debenture-holders had had notice of this Bill, and whether they knew it was intended to deal with their rights in the way proposed. If they had had notice, and the proposals were entertained, that might be an element for the Council to take into consideration. If the amount was only £20,000, and the debenture-holders had agreed to the altered

rate of 5 per cent, it might be that the Corporation should get the Bill through; but that was a matter that would have to be very carefully considered. One point which the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading did not refer to, and one about which he had been a little puzzled, was as to the objection to the provisions in clause 15. He did not quite see the manner of this, and why the sinking fund should not be applied *pro tanto* in reduction of the debentures. Why it should be given as a bonus to the debenture-holders he could not quite understand. One feature of the Bill—and it might be the fault of many others, and the Corporation now came to realise it—was simply that the power of raising money in the different localities had not been an unmixed blessing. He would not say anything further in the meantime, because the Bill would go to a Committee before it went to its third reading, and the Private Bills Committee would, no doubt, fully discuss the matter.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE thought the best settlement of this question would be for the consenting majority of bondholders first to buy up the bonds of the minority in London—that was a perfectly possible and desirable transaction—as a guarantee of the good faith of the Corporation, or the majority, or both. If the Legislature passed the Bill he entertained no doubt the colony would become liable morally for the payment of interest promised. They gave the *imprimatur* of the colony to the proposal, and ought to see that there were means to pay the interest. They might endeavour to wriggle out of it, but there was no doubt, if they passed the measure, as a colony they would be responsible for the compromise, and for the fulfilment of it on the part of the Corporation of Oamaru. That made it a very serious question, and he did not think the Council ought to pass the Bill until the consent of all was obtained.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said the Hon. Mr. Stevens had put the case very fully before the Council, and since then another feature had been added to the position by the speech of the mover of the Bill in reply to the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Bowen, who asked whether there was to be any finality. There seemed to be a doubt whether the quiescent bondholders had agreed to the position and to a Bill of this sort. If not, some other and further interference might be required, if nothing else, in connection with the proposal. One other feature had been referred to, and which the Council must consider: What would the effect be upon other securities of a like kind in the colony? What would be the effect if the holders of bonds of Harbour Boards and Municipalities once knew the Legislature were going to arbitrarily interfere with these bonds? It appeared to him that the whole of the bondholders would exercise caution in dealing with them, and he hoped that would be taken into consideration by the Council.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER wished to say a word upon the Bill. He only rose to point out that the fears that had been expressed by the Hon.

Mr. Ormond and the Hon. Mr. Bowen as to the want of finality in this measure were groundless. They would see this if they cast their eyes over clause 16. They would find that, although the power of rating up to 4s. was in clause 9, yet clause 16 provided that, if at any time a special rate of 4s. in the pound should be insufficient to provide the interest in full on the consolidated debentures, the Council was empowered to increase such special rate to an amount which would be sufficient to provide such interest. So that the Corporation would be empowered by the Bill, if it passed, to tax up to the full value of the rental over the properties in the town. They had already levied the full rate which by law they were empowered to levy. They could not go any further, and the result was a state of things which had been disclosed to the Council that day.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI would have thought that they would have heard some expression of opinion from the Ministerial benches upon this proposal. He would have thought that at least one or two honourable gentlemen on those benches would have got up and said something in reference to this Bill. They had been told by some honourable gentlemen that it was very gracious on the part of the bondholders to agree to a reduction from 7 per cent. to 5 per cent. If the bondholders had agreed to the security continuing under which their former bonds were held he would have had no objection whatever to the measure; but he had read, and had seen, a performance of one of Shakespeare's plays—"The Merchant of Venice." The worst character in that play, although an imaginary one, was one called Shylock. If ever there were a Shylock, he thought it was the bondholders who demanded such security as that Bill provided for. They were the worst of Shylocks that he had ever known. The first security of £25,000 was protected by a general rate; the second security was a similar one; the security on the £60,000 was a rate of 1s. 3d. in the pound. That was their security, and they were perfectly willing to provide for that. For the £50,000 there was a special rate of 1s., and for the £10,000 a special rate of 6d. That made 2s. 9d. But what they were demanding now was different, and more than the people were able to bear, because, as he had said, the property had so depreciated from year to year in consequence of the heavy taxation they had been suffering under. A Bill of that nature must have naturally a tendency to reduce the value of property still more, and the burden would eventually come to 20s. in the pound to those who were unfortunate enough to remain. He thought the Government would have done something to give some ease or some relief, but they were sitting coolly, calmly, and quietly there and did nothing. He should have thought they would have given them some relief, after hearing of their position. He would point out to his honourable friend that in 1884 he occupied a seat in another branch of the Legislature when two Bills were introduced—one for the

Westport Harbour and one for the Grey-mouth Harbour. Those measures were for the purpose of raising money for the benefit of private companies, and those measures had the indorsement of the Crown. Relief was given to those people; and if the Government had any feeling or sympathy for the people of the colony, instead of indorsing a Bill of the kind now before the Council they would have said, "We will take over the security and will hand it over to the Public Trustee, and we will indorse your bills and give you the money for 3½ or 4 per cent." If such a scheme were brought about the Government could take over the securities and could indorse the bonds for all local bodies. If that had been done they would not have that unfortunate Bill before them now. The security which the bondholders were getting the Government could have taken and handed over to the Public Trustee. Instead of having to pay 5 per cent. they would have got the money for 3½ per cent., and it would have been a great benefit to the local bodies. The Government would have saved half a million to the country—that was, taking the amount of money which the local bodies raised outside the colony. It had been said that it was very generous on the part of the bondholders to agree to the reduction of 2 per cent. But he thought they were under no compulsion to the bondholders. The bondholders were getting an extension of fourteen years—fourteen years of extra currency—and surely that was worth something. They got all the security, right and left; rates, rents, and everything in the place were now going to them; and then the ratepayer had to find money besides to pay the Corporation to keep up improvements. He should like to know how the Government expected the people of the colony to prosper under such circumstances as those. But in Oamaru they were cut off from the rest of the world. The member for Oamaru was standing single-handed in the matter. They got no assistance from Dunedin. The member for Oamaru was only one, but for a city like Dunedin there were three members, and there were the suburban members, and they gave a great support to the Government. As to Christchurch and Wellington it was the same. But, unfortunately, Oamaru had only one member, and the Government did not get as much support as they did from other places. After Oamaru had spent large sums of money on the waterworks, the Government stepped in and, by an Order in Council, caused the pollution, by declaring the River Maerewhenua a sludge-channel. The people had spent £175,000 on the waterworks, and that was all they had for their money. He had a sample of the water which showed its present condition. He hoped the House would have some sympathy for the people. The Government had shown no sense of responsibility or of feeling. They had had the finest water in the colony—Professor Black had said so; but the Government, to secure a few votes, had declared the Maerewhenua River a sludge-channel, and all the

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tailings went into it. He was not going to oppose the Bill, but he thought he ought to say these few words in the interests of the ratepayers. The Government should and ought to come to their assistance. They borrowed not for personal benefit, but for the health and benefit of the public, and for future generations.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT would express the opinion that a very important question had been raised as to the local loans for harbours. For some years he had been of the opinion that they paid too much for those loans. He considered that some general measure should be introduced by the Government—of course it could not be done that session—to consolidate the whole of the harbour loans and the securities over them. There would be no solution of the difficulty as regarded such harbours as Oamaru and Dunedin unless something of the kind were done. Regarding the present case, he wished to remark that the loans over which the difficulty with the bondholders had arisen were Nos. 1 and 2, for £60,000 and £50,000. Those loans bore interest at 7 per cent.; and it was clearly on those loans that the dissentient voice of the bondholders was heard. When those dissentients—he supposed one must look upon them as such—entered into that contract with the other bondholders they knew exactly the security they were getting. They entered into it voluntarily. Now, if it was proposed to do as the Hon. Mr. Downie Stewart said,—to accept the Bill so far as it regarded loans, that was, to accept 5 per cent.,—if they did that, the Council would see that they were, practically, increasing the security of those who were not wishing to go in. He thought that would be unfair. Those who were willing to accept 5 per cent. would only get 5 per cent. He did not see why the Council should hesitate to pass the Bill, seeing that it appeared such a small number were opposed to it, representing some £19,000, he thought. With regard to the question that had been raised about this measure not being final, he thought the Hon. Mr. Oliver had fairly answered that. At any rate, the majority of the bondholders considered that it would help them out of their difficulties, and were willing to accept the proposed scheme. It was only right, he thought, that the Bill should be passed. It would be a great service to Oamaru, notwithstanding the equivocal speech of the Hon. Mr. Shrimski, for he (Mr. Bolt) did not know whether that honourable gentleman would support the Bill or not. He himself thought it would be wise for the Council to pass it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR would merely like to say that the question was one of a very important character indeed. It was a question of expediency for the Corporation, and he believed it would be also to the advantage of the bondholders. There was no doubt it would be of great advantage to the people of Oamaru. Every effort should be made to get this matter settled, and he thought, therefore, that it would be advisable to allow the Bill to pass its second reading and go to Committee. It

seemed to him that there was a very great difference between active opposition on the part of a small section of the bondholders and simply negative action. They all knew of the difficulty in connection with getting people in a district to sanction a loan where a majority of three-fourths of the ratepayers was required in a district before a loan could be got. There were many people who would not vote at all; and, with regard to those bondholders holding nineteen thousand pounds' worth, they neither assented to nor dissented from the arrangement. He thought it was in the interests of the colony, and should be agreed to. With regard to these harbour loans, it had often been said that the Government should step in and take them up; but that was the very thing that the Council had set its face against, and a special condition was put in every Harbour Board loan that it was not to be made a charge upon the colony; otherwise sooner or later they would have had the whole of such loans thrown on the colony, and that was one reason why he was very anxious indeed to see a Bill of that character pass, if it could be done fairly and with justice to the people concerned, so that the people of the colony might not have those loans thrown upon them. Let the individual Board or body that was in difficulties make its own arrangements for getting out of those difficulties. He thought the colony should not be saddled with the results of large and unnecessary local expenditure. He would support the second reading, and reserve to himself the right to take further action at another stage.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS would not oppose the second reading, but at the same time he thought the Bill, instead of being in favour of the colony, was very much against it. What had been said by the Hon. Mr. Shrimski certainly bore out his views. If he mistook not, the bondholders as security had rates aggregating 4s. in the pound to depend upon, which, if they appointed a Receiver, would not give them 5 per cent. He was open to correction, because he might be wrong, but that was the information he had got, after making some inquiries. In that case they had no right to claim more. They took the loan up at a very high rate of interest with the understanding that they had those rates to depend upon, and he thought they should claim only such interest as those rates would provide. He did not object to the rate being retained at 4s. in the pound, but it was the 16th section of the Bill he objected to, which gave the bondholders the right to call upon the Borough Council to raise a rate without any limit as to amount, as had been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver. He would not object to the Bill, but he thought it was one of those Bills that required very serious consideration at the hands of the Council. The property in Oamaru at the present time was quite unsaleable on account of the heavy rates and taxation levied. He did not say the Corporation was to blame for that, but it was because they had been given too large borrowing-powers—larger than in other parts of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR said, with regard to the difficulty suggested by the Hon. Mr. Bowen, he wished to explain that, if the objection was not sufficiently met already by the statement made by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, he thought it would be sufficient to point out that, if what was meant by "finality" was that the Corporation was not taxed to the full extent of its resources, then all one could say was that the Bill, as it now appeared before the Council, really handed over everything in the shape of assets that the Corporation possessed, so that, in this sense, the matter, he thought, was quite sufficiently final. He was not aware of any process by which anything more could be gained by the bondholders either through the Legislature or in any other way. The Corporation, in coming to this arrangement with the creditors, had shown that they had taxed to the utmost limit of their taxing-powers. The rate fixed by the Bill was 4s. in the pound. It had been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver and others that the taxing-power was really unlimited, and, if the rate of 4s. in the pound was authorised by the Act, then no more rates could by any possibility, or by any process known to law, be squeezed out of the inhabitants. It must be admitted that the scheme had quite sufficient finality about it. With regard to the objection mentioned by the Hon. Dr. Grace, that, if this scheme was to receive the sanction of the Legislature, then the colony might be held liable to the dissentient bondholders, he had no hesitation in saying that there was absolutely no foundation for such a suggestion. It was sufficient to point to section 22, which said, "No claim of any holder of consolidated debentures or coupons, or of any creditor of the Corporation, shall attach to or be paid out of the public revenues of New Zealand or by the Government thereof." There was no ground, he apprehended, for the impression of the Hon. Dr. Grace as to the possible liability of the colony. He had not the least hesitation in saying that nothing that the Legislature could do in passing that Bill could in the slightest degree tend to make the colony responsible to those bondholders. With regard to the question raised by the Hon. Mr. Stewart as to the mode of payment of the sinking fund, he would just explain this, which would also meet the remark made by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore. It would be noticed that the sinking fund was attached to only one of the loans, the first loan mentioned in the schedule of the Bill; and the provisions of section 14 provided that that sinking fund was to be distributed amongst the holders of that loan. Section 15 merely provided the manner in which that sinking fund was to be distributed. If honourable members would notice that part of section 14 that was proposed to be struck out, it provided the manner in which the proceeds were to be distributed; and there was power to consolidate the proceeds of the sinking fund, which was to be distributed in proportion to the amount of the bonds. That had been thought to be a cumbrous method of dealing with the matter, and it was sug-

gested, when the Bill was in Committee in another place, that the method set out in section 15 would be simpler and more equitable. The remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stevens were entitled to a good deal of weight, and whatever weight they were entitled to was due not to the fact that this borough had proposed a scheme for meeting its creditors, but to the fact that the borough was compelled to make default. It was for the Council to consider whether it would not be better for the country as a whole, as well as for the borough, if some such arrangement as this could be carried out, than that the borough should be compelled to make default, and that the bondholders in England should be compelled to appoint a Receiver; because there was no doubt that the Corporation was in this position: that unless such a provision as this was made there would be the risk that the bondholders would be compelled to resort to legal proceedings and appoint a Receiver; and he submitted there could be no doubt that in the interests of the colony as a whole, and from a public policy point of view, which was that from which he understood the Hon. Mr. Stevens had looked at the matter, it was better that this scheme, which had the assent of so large a proportion of the holders of the bonds, should be carried out. That the arrangement would receive very careful consideration before being entered into they might rest assured. He would just refer to the remarks made on the subject by the solicitor acting for the bondholders in England. He said,—

"It is not necessary to go fully into the reasons which have induced the bondholders to assent, but the main inducement to them to do so has been the fact that, owing to the state of the municipality, it is anticipated that if their existing rights were enforced to the full extent infinite confusion and difficulty would be created between the various classes of bondholders in the assertion of their rights, and the probable result would be to create such burdens and charges upon the municipality, and to diminish its population and prosperity to such an extent, as to imperil seriously the interests of all the bondholders."

With regard to the question of the Hon. Mr. Stewart, whether the bondholders had been informed of the reasons for the proposals contained in the Bill, he might state that they had. He had in his hand a copy of a circular sent to the bondholders, which stated that to each one of them was sent a copy of the agreement that was proposed to be implemented in this Bill, and they were asked whether or not they consented to that arrangement, and the consent of a large number had been obtained in regard to that scheme. In these circumstances he was justified in asking the Council to treat as consenting parties those bondholders who had expressed no dissent, and who had made no representations to the Legislature. He might suggest that it might very fairly be taken that those bondholders did not dissent. He submitted that none of the objections that had been raised to the passing

of this measure were entitled to such weight as would justify the Council in objecting to the measure.

Bill read the second time.

SUNDAY TRADING.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS moved, *That the 16th section of "The Police Offences Act, 1884," should be forthwith so far amended as to relieve from liability to prosecution persons protecting their property in contravention of that section; and that the Government be requested to introduce an amendment of the Act to that effect during the present session.* He said the question referred to in this motion seemed to him to be of sufficient importance to justify him in bringing it before the Council. By the 16th section of the Police Offences Act persons were prohibited, under a penalty, from carrying out certain operations on Sundays. He was not going to say anything in regard to the general question of what was right or wrong to do on Sundays, but he thought the Council would agree with him that the interpretation that was given to that section of the Act was one which was quite incompatible with common-sense, and one which they did not approve of. The section ran thus:—

"Any person who on Sunday, in or in view of any public place, trades, works at his trade or calling, deals, transacts business, or exposes goods for sale, or keeps open to public view any house, store, shop, bar, or other place for the purpose of trading, dealing, transacting business, or exposing goods for sale therein, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding one pound.

"But nothing herein contained shall apply to works of necessity or charity, or the driving of live-stock, or the sale of medicines, or the sale or delivery of milk, or to hairdressers or barbers before nine o'clock in the forenoon, or to persons driving any public or private carriage or cab, or to persons employed in the working of railway trains or tram cars, or cable lines, or on steamers, vessels, or boats, or to any livery stable-keeper, or to any person letting boats for hire, or any person employed in or in connection with any telegraph or post office, or to any person employed in preparing, printing, and publishing a daily paper."

That was, of course, very restrictive. It was well known that there were many laws which were invariably broken by general consent; but the application which had been given on more than one occasion to that section was really such as to call for their earnest attention. He might instance the case that occurred a few years ago in Wellington. In the hottest weather, in the middle of summer, an unfortunate Chinaman was detected by the police watering his vegetables. He was prosecuted under this section of the Act, and was fined, and had to pay the law expenses—about £1 10s. That man was simply saving his plants by the raising or sale of which he got his living. He presumed a certain class of the public considered that Chinamen ought to be subject to a good deal more restriction than other people, but he did not think that was the

view of that Chamber. Then, again, within the last few months—during the last harvest—another case occurred; and he would read the newspaper report:—

"HARVESTING ON SUNDAY.—PROSECUTION OF A FARMER.

"The following particulars of an action against a farmer for working on Sunday are taken from the *Otago Daily Times* of yesterday:—

"At the Mosgiel Police Court, on Tuesday before Messrs. H. H. Inglis, Mayor of Mosgiel, and W. Carncross, M.H.R., a farmer named Dennis O'Brien, who was undefended, pleaded guilty to a charge of having on Sunday, the 22nd January, worked at his calling at Wingatui, in view of a public road. The accused added that he thought he was committing no offence in doing the work. The information was laid under section 16 of 'The Police Offences Act, 1884,' which provided for the imposition of a penalty not exceeding £1 on any person who works on Sunday in or in view of any public place, exception being made in favour of works of necessity and charity, and persons employed in certain trades and professions.

"Constable Miller said the accused had a paddock of hay in coils in the week preceding the Sunday in question, and it was ready for stacking, but wet weather coming on he was unable to stack it. On the Sunday, which was a dry day, the coils were turned over to catch the wind, and accused thought that if after that he left it untouched until the Monday it would be very injurious to it should rain fall. It was not then in a position for throwing rain off. On the Sunday he got a few men to help him to stack it, because he feared that rain might come on, and he said he did the work simply to protect the hay from any wet weather. No doubt rain would have seriously injured the hay, but, as it turned out, it did not rain on the Sunday, nor the following Monday.

"In reply to Mr. Inglis the witness said it would have been a serious thing for the man if it had rained on the Sunday; in reply to a remark made by Mr. Carncross, that the Act did not apply to works of necessity, and the constable had told them that the work accused did was a work of necessity.

"Constable Miller said that the work might be called one of necessity if rain had come on; but, as the day turned out, it did not rain.

"Mr. Inglis, after consulting with his colleague, said: Defendant, having admitted the charge, will be fined 1s. without costs. Personally, I have grave doubts as to whether this is an information that ever ought to have been laid. I do not think that any offence against the Act is disclosed, but defendant having admitted the offence the Bench have no option but to inflict a small fine."

He thought when he read this case that they had entered upon a new era; and he thought it would be well to make such matters public, and prevent a repetition of such extreme pro-

ceedings. Whether the Bench was peculiarly constituted, and might with advantage undergo certain alterations in that locality, or whether the constable might with advantage be removed to another sphere of inutility, was a matter for consideration. What was wanted was that the Government, who were responsible for legislation of that class, should introduce some measure that would put a stop to this state of things. If the present law were allowed to remain, a man was not to be allowed to exercise a proper diligence in saving his property on Sunday without wilfully offending the prejudices of other persons. It appeared to him that man ought to be allowed to do so. He would ask the Government to take this into consideration, in order that such enormities, as he might call them, might not appear again.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said it was not often that his honourable friend was in a humorous vein upon an important question of that sort. He thought the honourable gentleman had shown by his own statement that there was absolutely no necessity to amend the law. On reading the motion of his honourable friend that morning, he had taken pains to ascertain if there were any such convictions, and he had been unable to get any information whatever. The cases to which his honourable friend referred were not recorded, except in the newspaper quoted from. With regard to the case of the Chinaman, he might say there could be no legislation to abolish fools. The man who laid the information was a great fool, but he would call the Magistrate by another name.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the Chinaman?

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said the Chinaman was not a fool; but the policeman who laid the information went out of his way, certainly, to do so. They had all read in the book to which most of them paid attention that if certain animals were in a "hole" on the Sabbath-day the owners might get them out of it. The provisions of the Act to which his honourable friend had called attention, he thought, had escaped him. If he looked at clause 16 he would see that works of necessity were exempted. Regarding the case his honourable friend had quoted, he did not think it was a work for which that man should have been fined. There was scarcely any man who was not obliged to do work on Sunday—work of a character which some people might object to, but which was a work of necessity. He imagined, however, that the vegetables might just as well have been watered on Monday as on the Sunday morning. He hoped the honourable gentleman would agree not to insist upon the amendment, under the circumstances he had referred to.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI quite agreed with the honourable gentleman who had just spoken on this matter. But the Act of Charles II. was still in existence, and probably it was better to repeal the law. There had been convictions under it, and he presumed there would be convictions. He thought something should be done to prevent the fining of persons for work-

ing at their trade on Sunday if it was a work of necessity. He thought an alteration was necessary, and should be made to meet such cases. As the Attorney-General had said, if the Magistrate had not been—well, he was going to say something—he would not have inflicted a fine in the case referred to. He agreed that something should be done to prevent a man's being fined in such cases.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART would mention that in 1884 an Act was passed and looked upon as declaring the wishes of the Legislature. It had been effective in its character, and had worked satisfactorily. Eight years had elapsed since that Act was passed, and it continued to work well. In the case referred to by the Hon. Mr. Stevens, clearly the Magistrate was of opinion that no offence had been committed, but by reason of the fact that the man pleaded guilty the Magistrate was of opinion that he had to convict him: in other words, the Magistrate was of opinion that the work was a work of necessity, but that inasmuch as the defendant had pleaded guilty the Bench had to impose a fine. The Magistrate referred to was a very good officer, but he had had little experience on the bench, and he evidently thought that as the man had pleaded guilty on the evidence it was necessary to impose a fine. He did not wish to say anything further, but inasmuch as the present Act had been in existence for eight years, and was working successfully, the explanation of the Hon. Mr. Stevens really showed that there was no case, and it had not been shown that the law had been interfered with by what this man was doing.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON said he knew of a similar case. There was some reclamation taking place in Auckland, and in some instances it went out to the very edge of low water. Something went wrong with the piles. As honourable members knew, the spring tide went a great deal further back than the neap tides. The contractor got some of his men to work on Sunday, as that was the only day the tides would permit of their working, as the tide went further back than on the previous day. It was truly a work of necessity. The tide was largely influenced by the wind, and that was the only opportunity the contractor had of doing the work. The work was one of absolute necessity, he apprehended. In the country he came from—Scotland—he thought that people paid as much attention to the Sabbath-day as anywhere. He had frequently been employed taking vessels in and out of dock on a Sunday, and taking them up on the slip. They were paid at the rate of double time for the work; and he might say he rather liked it.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS, in reply, said the Hon. Mr. Stewart stated that the law passed eight years ago was working well; but he earnestly asked the honourable gentleman to read that clause 16. It was a bad clause, and very unsatisfactory in every point of view. The case he had referred to showed that the clause was not sufficiently distinct and clear. It seemed

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to him that an unfortunate person was dragged up by the police, under unfortunate circumstances, and called upon to say whether he did certain work, and he said, "Yes." Of course, he was an extremely guilty person! He thought that the Act ought to be in such a form that an information would not be laid against persons under such circumstances. Whether or not the law provided for this now, an information could be laid against a person and made him liable to a penalty. What he objected to was, that a person who was working for himself—say a farmer—was liable to be dragged up before the Bench at the mere will and pleasure of a constable. It appeared to him that the whole of that clause required to be rationally reconsidered. He was sorry to see that the Colonial Secretary did not think so. He had thought the honourable gentleman would have been rather glad to see the law of the country put into a shape that would be as little pressing as possible; but he supposed they must wait until happier times before they could get wrongs of the kind redressed.

The Council divided.

AYES, 14.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Stevens
Bonar	Oliver	Swanson
Bowen	Ormond	Taiaroa
Dignan	Peacock	Whyte.
Kelly	Shrimski	

NOES, 15.

Baillie	Jennings	Stewart
Bolt	Kerr	Walker, L.
Buckley	Montgomery	Walker, W. C.
Feldwick	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Jenkinson	Rigg	Whitmore.

Majority against, 1.

Motion lost.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 16th August, 1893.

First Readings—R. R. Meredith—Volunteers' Claims to Scrip—Small Farmers—Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Claims—Constables and Detectives—Auckland Firemen and Drivers—New Zealand Rifle Association—Taranaki Roads—H.M.S. "Victoria"—Rainfall—South Island Landless Natives—Wairarapa Lake—D. B. Orchard—Palmerston North Courthouse—Government Insurance Advances—Rotorua Sanatorium—Tree-planting—Lease-in-perpetuity Selectors—Patterson's Estate—Westport Colliery Reserves—Dunedin Burgess Roll—Correspondence with Agent-General—Adjournment—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Kaitangata Cemetery Reserves Sale Bill, Public Reserves Bill, Westland and Nelson

Coalfields Administration Bill, Endowment and Educational Reserves Bill, District Railways Bill.

R. R. MEREDITH.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, If it is their intention to give effect to the recommendation of the Public Petitions Committee on the petition of R. R. Meredith? The following was the report of the Public Petitions Committee:—

"Petitioner was instructed by the Whareama Road Board to remove certain obstructions from the East Coast Road, and in carrying out such instructions he became the defendant in an action for trespass, and had to pay the sum of £246 15s. 11d. law-costs in connection with the same. I am directed to report that this Committee is of opinion that petitioner is entitled in equity to be paid the sum of £246 15s. 11d., the amount of law-costs incurred and paid by him in defending a suit for trespass, which trespass occurred through his carrying out certain instructions by the Whareama Road Board. That such sum of money should be paid by the Wairarapa North County Council, into which the Whareama Road Board has merged. That, inasmuch as the Wairarapa North County Council now refuse to pay such costs, although having formerly agreed to do so, the Committee recommend the Government to bring in a Bill during this session giving power to Mr. R. R. Meredith to sue the Wairarapa North County Council, and to recover from them any damages that may be awarded to him, notwithstanding any law to the contrary."

Mr. J. McKENZIE might say, in reply to the honourable gentleman, that this matter had been very carefully considered by the Government, and they had come to the resolution that it was a matter entirely for the local body and Mr. Meredith.

Mr. HOGG begged to move the adjournment of the House, in order that he might bring this case before honourable members, for, in his opinion, the facts were most important. He thought it was one of the most glaring cases of hardship and injustice that had happened during the existence of the present Parliament, and he believed that if members were acquainted with the facts they would be of that opinion. The petitioner, three years ago, along with his father, were members of a Road Board in his (Mr. Hogg's) district known as the Whareama Road Board. Early in the year 1889 a district road through the Eparaima Native Reserve was obstructed by the Native owners, who erected a fence and cut a drain across the road. The Secretary of the Post and Telegraph Department thereupon called upon the Chairman to take immediate steps to remove the obstruction, so that the mails might be carried over the highway. The Chairman took legal opinion on the subject, and, instead of incurring any responsibility himself, he called a special meeting of the Board. This special meeting was held on the 28th February, 1889. The Chairman, Mr. Meredith, senior—not the petitioner, who was simply a member of the Board—sub-

mitted the whole of the correspondence between the Post and Telegraph Department and himself, and the result was that a resolution was passed in conformity with the instructions he had received from the Postmaster-General. The resolution directed two members of the Board, the petitioner and Mr. Carswell, to remove the obstruction which had been complained of. In terms of the Board's resolution these gentlemen proceeded to remove the obstruction, and the result of this was that they were involved in litigation. Under the resolution passed by the Board, steps were initiated by Messrs. Chapman and FitzGerald, solicitors, for the prosecution of those guilty of obstruction; but immediately when this was done notice was given by Mr. Travers, acting on behalf of Mr. George Moore, who at that time held a lease of the Native reserve from the Natives who had caused the obstruction, that the legal right of the Board to the road would be tested in the Supreme Court by an action for trespass. In consequence of this, Messrs. Chapman and FitzGerald stayed their proceedings. Subsequently, Mr. Moore, who was also a member of this Road Board, endeavoured to get the Board to take no further proceedings in the matter; but his resolution to that effect failed to meet with a seconder,—showing that the opinion of the Board was that proceedings should be taken in order to put the public clearly in possession of this road. An action, Moore *versus* Meredith, was then commenced in the Supreme Court, and it was defended by the petitioner in vindication of the action of the Board and of the public interest in connection with this road. Mr. Justice Richmond, before whom the action was tried, upheld the right of the Board and the public to the road in question, on the ground that the road had been in public use for a considerable number of years, and that at various times sums of money, including £154 borrowed by the Road Board under the Loans to Local Bodies Act, had been expended on the special portion which was now obstructed. The plaintiff, Mr. George Moore, thereupon appealed from that decision to the Court of Appeal, and that Court reversed the judgment of Mr. Justice Richmond on a legal technicality. The legal technicality, which he (Mr. Hogg) need not describe, occurred through no fault of the Road Board which controlled the road, but was due indirectly to the laxity of the Government in not relieving the local body in the first instance of all responsibility with reference to the titles to roads through Native lands. The Road Board, he would point out, simply acted under the instructions of the Postmaster-General and the Postal Department. The petitioner, a member of that Road Board, simply acted as the servant of a public body. The responsibility, in his (Mr. Hogg's) opinion, for these legal proceedings and the expenses that were incurred clearly rested with this Government department. His impression was that the Government ought certainly to make good this money. In saying so, he must admit that the Petitions Committee were to a large extent

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justified in the report that they presented. They found that Mr. Meredith, being a servant of the Board, was entitled to his expenses from the Board. The Board in the meantime had become merged in the County Council; and the County Council, being appealed to, after an investigation adopted the report of a Committee which recommended that the amount expended by Mr. Meredith should be paid subject to a reference to the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General, on being referred to, intimated that he could not pass the item. The Council thereupon declined to pay the money. Mr. Meredith, seeing that the sum was very considerable, had no option then but to appeal to Parliament. He (Mr. Hogg) did not for a moment contend that it was either fair or right that the few ratepayers concerned in this road should be required to make good this amount of money; but he said, seeing that the trouble had arisen in carrying out the instructions of the Postal Department, and especially of the Postmaster-General, whose letter on the subject had been before the Petitions Committee, and seeing, therefore, that this department was responsible for the litigation, and for the expenditure incurred therewith, he thought it was only fair and reasonable that the Government of the country should make good this money. There was one thing certain: that the petitioner, acting as a servant of a local body in carrying out instructions in pursuance of a resolution, ought not to be mulcted in an amount of money like this. It was now nearly three years since the occurrence he had narrated took place, and he thought it was very hard indeed that the petitioner should be kept out of this sum of £246 odd. The duty, in his opinion, devolved on the Government to make good this amount of money, and relieve this petitioner of what seemed to be an exceedingly grievous wrong. He therefore hoped the Government would take this matter into their very serious consideration. He thought the petitioner had been very badly treated indeed. No doubt, directly he had a claim on the Road Board, but indirectly the claim really rested on the Government of the country, who were responsible for the expenditure that had taken place in connection with the litigation that occurred over the road he referred to.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that, as this question had been before the House on a previous occasion, and had occupied a great deal of the time of the House, he did not propose on the present occasion to say very much about it. He thought quite sufficient had already been said to justify letting the matter rest; but the honourable member for Masterton, who had moved the adjournment of the House, had laid great emphasis upon the fact that the petitioner, by order of the Road Board, had removed the obstruction on this disputed road under the instructions of the Postmaster-General. Well, that was to a certain extent true; but the actual position of matters had been entirely misrepresented to that official. The Postmaster-General was informed by the Chair-

man of the Road Board that, owing to this road being blocked, it was impossible to deliver the mails that were carried through this district twice a week. The true facts of the case were that in that particular locality there were two alternative roads within a few chains of each other, one of them being this particular road which was the subject of the dispute, and which for the time being was blocked, while the other road—a perfectly legal road, and the subject of no dispute whatever—was perfectly open for anybody to traverse without let or hindrance. And yet this Chairman of the Whareama Road Board, the father of the petitioner, knowing this to be the case, purposely concealed this important point, and wrote to the Postmaster-General informing him that Her Majesty's mails were stopped, and that it was impossible for them to proceed unless this obstruction were removed. Now, he (Mr. Buchanan) contended that under these circumstances the legal costs which the petitioner, who, as the honourable gentleman had already said, was the son of the Chairman of the Road Board, had had to pay were justly and rightly saddled upon them, because of their own action in this matter. There was no occasion whatever to take any urgent and violent action as to the obstruction on the road: that could have been removed, or otherwise, under legal process, instructed by the Board in the usual way and involving no personal liability by the members. The petitioner, however, and the other members of the Road Board who acted with him, had, with their eyes open, elected to use violence, knowing very well that if the law went against them they would have to pay the costs, and, possibly, damages for trespass on private land. There was only one other point to which he wished to refer. The honourable member for Masterton had said that £154 of the ratepayers' money was spent on the road, and that therefore the Road Board were justified in insisting that they should get possession of the road, and that the Government acted quite wrongfully in not assisting the local body to get possession. If he were to go into details of what occurred previously to this he could show the House that the resolution under which the expenditure of the money was made on this disputed road was *ultra vires*—that there was not a quorum present when the amount was passed for expenditure; and that it was entirely owing to the action of the petitioner and the Chairman of the Road Board that this money was illegally expended on the disputed road. He did not wish to further detain the House; the record of the whole case was in a former *Hansard*, and honourable members who wished to inform themselves on the subject could easily do so. But he hoped the Government would stand to the decision they had announced—that they would leave the matter to be settled between the parties themselves. If Mr. Meredith had a case against the local authorities, the law-courts of the colony were open to him, and he could easily settle the matter there.

Mr. FISH said he was Chairman of the

Committee in 1890, and, whilst his memory did not serve him in regard to the details of the case in connection with this matter, it was sufficiently clear on it to enable him to say that the statement made by the honourable member for Masterton was, in the main, correct, and he did not think the version given by the honourable member for Wairarapa came under the same category. He was quite convinced, from the evidence that had come before the Committee—and he had gone into the matter exhaustively, and given considerable time to it—that the petitioner had entirely and distinctly proved his case; and he did not himself know of a case of greater hardship to an individual since he had had the honour of being a member of the House. The honourable member for Wairarapa and his friends had had a good deal to do with the matter, which did not redound, in his opinion, to their credit. He said that distinctly. The petitioner was entitled to relief from some one, and the recommendation of the Committee at the time was an honest and logical and just one. He had gone into the facts very fully when they were fresh in his memory, in the session of 1890, and he was sorry to think that a wrong like that which had been done to Mr. Meredith had been allowed to remain so long unrighted.

Mr. EARNSHAW said it appeared to him sometimes doubtful as to what good was done by Committees going carefully into these questions. They went carefully into the evidence; and what good was there in the Committee sitting if, when they came to a resolution that was fair and reasonable, the Government did not see fit to carry it into effect? There was no doubt that the Committee went most exhaustively into this case of Mr. Meredith's, and there was no question at all but that Mr. Meredith had right and justice on his side, and that he was to a certain extent the victim of what was almost a conspiracy on the part of the honourable member for Wairarapa and his friends.

Mr. McGUIRE said he was a member of that Committee, and he might say that the matter had been thoroughly investigated, and the members of the Committee were unanimous in the opinion that Mr. Meredith had a just claim.

Mr. FERGUS said that might be all right enough. He knew perfectly well that in nine cases out of ten the petitions that came before the House were bogus, and very unjust things were done by the House in granting the requests of petitioners. The worst point with regard to dealing with petitions that appeared before the House was that only one side was investigated. A petitioner brought all the evidence he could, and possibly brought all his friends, earwigged members, and waited about the lobbies, and dodged members about their hotels, and the result was that they had reports brought up from the Petitions Committees which were not worth the paper on which they were written. The Petitions Committees and other Committees of the House were supposed to be semi-judicial bodies, but they did not

comply with that description at all; they took *ex parte* statements, and the members of the Committees adjudicated upon cases after hearing only half of the evidence. With regard to this petition under review at the present time, what were the facts? It appeared that a certain Road Board made representations to the Government—or the Chairman did—that a certain road was blocked, and the mails could not be carried, although it was only one of two parallel roads close together. The Road Board passed a resolution authorising the removal of certain obstructions which were on the road. The Road Board were therefore responsible for their action; they ought to have obtained legal opinion before acting. They took action on their own part, and were bound by any results which might follow. What claim, in the name of Heaven, had the petitioner against that House? Were the mistakes of all the local bodies of the colony to be thrown upon the colony? He had not the slightest doubt that many members of the House could bring up cases in which local bodies had suffered through their own stupidity and indiscretion; and were they going to saddle all their blunders on the colony? That was quite a new departure, and one that would not for a moment bear scrutiny. He considered that the opinion of the Government, as expressed through the Minister of Lands, was a fair and just one. They were there on those benches to see that the colony was not robbed. It might be true—he did not say it was not—that Mr. Meredith had some grievance, but it was certainly not against the Government of the colony. If there was any grievance it rested between Mr. Meredith and the local body of which he was Chairman at the time; and if it had become defunct now, and the county had taken it over, the county must take over this liability of theirs in the past.

Mr. FISH said that was just what they would not do.

Mr. FERGUS asked, then, was the colony to do so? He could not understand why the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) was supporting this petition. That honourable gentleman was Chairman of the Committee at the time, and the evidence he (Mr. Fergus) had just read clearly indicated to him that it was entirely lop-sided, and that the report was arrived at on lop-sided evidence. He hoped the House would pause, and pause a long time, before it entered into any course of action which would render the colony liable for innumerable claims from all the local bodies in the colony.

Mr. TAYLOR entirely disagreed with the remarks made by the last speaker, especially with reference to the manner in which he said the Public Petitions Committee dealt with petitions. He would not like it to go forth to the country that the reports of those gentlemen who gave their time day after day investigating cases were not worth the paper they were written on. His honourable friend was quite mistaken in making assertions of that

kind, and being an ex-Minister of the Crown he ought to know it. Had he been a novice he would not have so much minded his making a misstatement of that kind, but when a member made out that if a petition was presented in regard to any grievance it was simply waste of time, and one would get no fair-play, and that the Committee, as a rule, dealt with such petitions as with a letter that was thrown into a waste-paper basket, he denied that altogether. He gave a great deal of time and careful consideration to all petitions which came before the Committee, and he could say honestly and fairly that he dealt with them on their merits. The Committee had reports from the various departments and from the men before them, and they judged fairly and honestly as between man and man; and it was unjust and unfair in the honourable member for Wakatipu to make a statement of the kind.

Mr. BRUCE had not intended to take part in the discussion, but he wished to relieve his honourable friend the member for Christchurch City of certain misapprehensions with regard to what had been said by the honourable member for Wakatipu. He was a member of the Public Petitions Committee in company with his honourable friend, and would resent, as that honourable gentleman had done, any reflections or imputations cast on the deliberations of that Committee, or of any Committee of the House; but what he wished to point out was this: The honourable gentleman was entirely mistaken in reference to the remarks made by the honourable member for Wakatipu. He appeared to assume that the honourable member for Wakatipu considered that parties did not get justice, and that their petitions were thrown into the waste-paper basket. On the contrary, the honourable gentleman wished to make it appear that petitioners very often so strongly represented their case that they got undue consideration given to their claims.

Mr. HOGG, in reply, said he could quite understand the attitude that had been taken up by the honourable member for Wakatipu with regard to the petition. He remembered that not very long ago a petition emanating from his district was presented to that honourable gentleman when he was Minister of Justice. The petition was signed by the Mayor of Masterton, by, he thought, nearly every Justice living in that district, and by, as far as he was aware, nearly the whole of the leading inhabitants—one of the most influential petitions that ever came from that district, as far as the signatures went. He could remember that petition being presented to the honourable gentleman when he occupied that high and dignified office. The petition was in reference to an exceedingly cruel case, where a man was prosecuted for a violation of the Distillation Act by having a portion of a still upon his premises, and the evidence went almost clearly to show that it was what was called, familiarly speaking, a put-up job on the part of the police—that the article had been deposited on the man's premises in the dead of the night, and the police, evidently directed

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to the very spot, met there by pre-arrangement. The article was discovered, and no man was more astonished than the individual who was prosecuted and dragged away from his family. A more gross case of cruel injustice never came before a tribunal in this country; and, notwithstanding all this, notwithstanding the very strong presumptive evidence, and, in his opinion, the most conclusive evidence, that the police were a party to this black and dastardly affair—in spite of all this, that man was heavily fined, and he ran the risk of being entirely ruined. If he remembered aright, he had to pay a penalty of £75. Where that money went he did not know.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not, in his reply, travel outside of what had cropped up in the course of the discussion.

Mr. HOGG said he was merely mentioning this case because he wished to point out to the House that when an influential petition, signed by all the leading residents of the Wairarapa, almost, was presented to that honourable gentleman in his capacity of Minister of Justice they could not even get a courteous reply from him. He failed even to acknowledge it.

Mr. FERGUS.—That is untrue.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must not say that.

Mr. FERGUS said the statement of the honourable gentleman was absolutely incorrect, and he should take an opportunity of dealing with the honourable gentleman at a later period of the session.

Mr. HOGG said that, if his recollection served him aright, they got no reply; but if they did get a reply it was couched in such language as to be simply an insult. The matter was never investigated, and not the slightest attempt was made to give redress to the individual who was so severely wronged. That was the action of the honourable member for Wakatipu. Then, the honourable member for Wairarapa said this matter ought to be allowed to rest, and he called attention to the facts disclosed in *Hansard*. He was perfectly well aware that this question had been already before the House, and that the honourable member for the Wairarapa on that occasion made a number of assertions which would not bear the light of day. The honourable gentleman professed very frequently to know a great deal on every conceivable subject. He endeavoured to make the House believe that he was generally well informed, and that every other honourable member knew very little upon any question at issue. He (Mr. Hogg) would point out that the honourable member had been consistently misleading the House in regard to this very subject. Why, in 1891 that honourable gentleman was reported in *Hansard* to have said that the alternative road he referred to, which the Road Board ought to have used instead of fighting as they did for the recognised district road—the honourable gentleman said this road, which was known as Rawson's Road, was adopted by resolution as the district road by the Whareama

Road Board. What was the fact? Would the House believe that this deviation was never adopted by the Whareama Road Board? The statement, to put it mildly, was simply incorrect.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No, it was not.

Mr. HOGG said the honourable gentleman said, "No, it was not." He defied the honourable gentleman to point to any resolution. As a matter of fact, the road was never adopted by the Board. That was one of his misrepresentations. Then, he said that the Surveyor-General's letter of date the 11th August, 1888, told the Chairman of the Board that the road was an illegal one; and he also stated that it was not possible, owing to the nature of the Maori title, to make it a legal one. Now, the Surveyor-General's letter did nothing of the kind, as would be seen if it were referred to. It did not cast the least doubt on the legality of the road. It merely said that the Government had no power to take roads from the Eparaima Native Reserve or the other Native reserves in the Whareama district granted under "The Native Reserves Titles Grant Empowering Act, 1886." He might state that there were several other Native reserves in the Whareama district, through which the district road ran, with exactly the same title as the reserve in question, and yet the road was being maintained up to the present time by the County Council. In fact, up to the period he referred to the legality of this road was never questioned. And now with regard to some other misrepresentations that had been made. It had been alleged that the Chairman of the Whareama Road Board, Mr. Meredith, senior, had in his possession this letter from the Surveyor-General, and that, having it in his possession, he withheld it, and led the County Council into a trap.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was travelling into new matter.

Mr. HOGG said he was merely referring to some misrepresentations that had been indulged in by the honourable member for Wairarapa.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman's reply could only extend to the matter brought forward during this present debate, and he was not entitled to go into statements made in a previous debate.

Mr. HOGG said he would not refer further to it beyond mentioning this fact, and he thought he might be allowed to do that: that the Surveyor-General's letter, to which so very much weight had been attached, had been before the County Council and a committee.

Mr. BUCHANAN rose to a point of order. The Surveyor-General's letter was not mentioned in the debate which had taken place that afternoon.

Mr. SPEAKER said that, as the letter had not been referred to by any previous speaker, the honourable gentleman could not refer to it.

Mr. HOGG thoroughly understood it had not been referred to in the present discussion, but it was referred to two years ago by the honourable member for Wairarapa; and he was

quite aware the honourable gentleman did not want to have any reference made to it now. He merely stated this, and he did not say that the honourable gentleman's statements on that occasion were wilful misrepresentations.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not say that.

Mr. HOGG said he would not say that.

Mr. BUCHANAN would ask the Speaker to rule that the honourable member must withdraw what he said.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman said he would not make the statement, but he would remind the honourable gentleman that he could not be permitted to evade the rules of debate by a veiled insinuation that the honourable member for Wairarapa had made wilful misrepresentations; and he warned the honourable gentleman that he would not allow him to travel beyond what was his right in reply.

Mr. HOGG bowed most respectfully to the Speaker's ruling, and he was quite pleased to be warned, because he knew that these warnings were frequently applied to members on his side of the House. He was not making any reflections on the impartiality of the Chair. Now, reference had been made, he thought by the honourable member for Wakatipu, to *ex parte* statements; he said that reports of Committees were frequently based on these *ex parte* statements. On this point he would again refer to the petitioner, and to his attempts to bring all the evidence he possibly could bring to bear—evidence of the most direct and substantial character—before the Committee. There was a large amount of documentary evidence, minutes, reports, and everything else, and the two sides were exceedingly well represented. He thought it was only fair that he should state, from his own knowledge, that if ever there was a Committee in that House which deserved great credit for the painstaking investigation they made in connection with a petition presented to them it was the Petitions Committee on that occasion. The Chairman of the Committee, and the members generally on that Committee, were perfect strangers to the petitioner, and he thought they would bear him out when he said that neither he nor the petitioner had endeavoured to influence them. All that was thought of was to do justice in the matter, and that the Committee were willing to give, but up to the present time even, mere scant justice had not been received. He thought it was wrong, when Committees brought forward reports of this character, that such reports should be treated simply as waste paper. He had been waiting for justice to this young man, to this constituent of his, for nearly three years, but up to the present moment the petitioner had not received a farthing. He had gone to trouble and expense, and had taken the trouble to appear before the Committee, and he was waiting anxiously to see whether that report would be acted upon; but up to the present time nothing had been done by the Government of the day to afford him

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justice. If he had been an influential individual his position would be very different, or if he represented a body of men who could bring pressure to bear upon the Government, then, even if he was antagonistic to the Government, it was quite possible something would be done. It was not creditable to any Government, after the Petitions Committee had dealt with the matter in this way, and made a strong representation, that they should make no effort to do justice to a man who had suffered a very great wrong. This was one of the most cruel cases ever presented before any Administration.

Motion for the adjournment of the House negatived.

VOLUNTEER CLAIMS TO SCRIP.

Mr. RHODES asked the Minister of Lands, Whether he will instruct the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Christchurch to rehear all Volunteer claims for scrip, and whether he will forward to the said Commissioner a copy of the following portion of the Deputy Surveyor's letter of the 9th August to himself (Mr. Rhodes): viz., "The subsection (4) of section 2 of the Act of 1889 admits claims of persons within the colony, thus including Canterbury as well as other districts. Claims of men who have served in any part of the colony are admitted so long as other provisions of the Act are complied with." Some three weeks ago he brought this question up, and at that time the Minister of Defence assured him that the Volunteers in Canterbury were not entitled to this scrip. At that time he (Mr. Rhodes) pointed out that by the law they were perfectly well entitled to this scrip; and now he had a letter written by the Survey Department admitting his contention, and stating that the Volunteers in Canterbury were entitled by subsection (4) of section 2 of the Act of 1889 to this scrip. The result of the mistake was this: that the men sent in applications, and were refused on the ground that no Canterbury Volunteers were entitled. Their claims had been debarred on that ground. Under section 8 of the Act of 1892 it was in the power of the Minister, when he was satisfied that these claims were unfairly barred, to send them back to the Commissioners. The section was as follows:—

"Section eight of the last-mentioned Act is hereby repealed, and the following substituted:—

"8. Every Commissioner, after inquiry into any claim brought before him, shall transmit the papers in such claim, together with his recommendation thereon, to the Minister of Lands.

"If after examination the said Minister shall dissent from the Commissioner's recommendation upon any such claim, he may remit the papers in the claim for further consideration by the Commissioner; and if he shall approve any recommendation, and it be in favour of the claimant, the Minister shall report accordingly to the Governor, stating in such report that the claimant has proved his claim," *et cetera*.

The Minister had power to send these claims back, if he chose, for further investigation, and if he did so he would find that these men had been debarred from receiving the reward they should have received for the services they had rendered to the country, and that in a most unfair manner.

Mr. SPEAKER pointed out that the honourable gentleman was entering into debatable matter.

Mr. RHODES did not wish to do that, but would point out that, under section 10 of the Act of 1891,—

“The Governor in Council may, for the purpose of giving effect to the provisions of this Act, and to insure uniform action by the several Commissioners in the determination of claims under section two of ‘The Naval and Military Settlers’ and Volunteers’ Land Act, 1889,’ make such regulations as may seem necessary.”

It seemed to him that, if the Minister would issue regulations for the carrying-out of the Act, some uniform action could be taken by all the Commissioners throughout the colony, and they would not have one Commissioner in one place—because he said the Canterbury Volunteers were not entitled—taking action to prevent their claims from being met, while the Commissioner in another district gave scrip to men who had performed just the same service. There were five persons who sent in their claims, their names being Young, Findley, P. Coira, G. Levens, and White; and because these people had been debarred, several others who had similar claims had refrained from sending them in. Therefore he thought the Minister should go a step further than he had done, and allow these men who had been debarred for this reason to send in their claims.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it was not his intention to reply to the speech of the honourable gentleman. The answer to the question was that under the Act of 1892 the Minister of Lands had power to revise these claims, and, if he disagreed with the Commissioner, to send them back to that officer for reconsideration; and that had been done in all cases. He therefore did not see what ground there was for complaint.

SMALL FARMERS.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Government, What number of small farmers or others are expected to arrive per s.s. “Ruahine” under the reduced fares arranged by the Agent-General, and what steps are being taken to settle these people on suitable land? He put this question on the Order Paper because he saw by a Press Association telegram that a small party had arrived by the “Ruahine” in consequence of assisted passages having been given to them. Since that steamer had arrived a telegram had been sent round the colony by the Press Association describing the class to which the persons belonged, and he had no doubt the Minister of Lands would be glad to give the House information on the subject. The telegram to which he referred was this:—

“By the ‘Ruahine’ there arrived, under the auspices of Mr. Courtney, in order to take up land in Taranaki, a party who came out under the assisted-passages scheme. The party comprises seventy-three adults and two children, sixteen of the number being women. The majority are young men formerly employed in London offices, in city occupations only, few being practically acquainted with the work of farming. Nearly all possess a little money. It appears to be their general intention to seek work on farms prior to taking up land. Though not practical farmers, the majority of the immigrants appear to be of a good stamp, and suitable for settlers. Mr. Courtney had given a number of lectures on Taranaki in England. These were the means of inducing many to come out. Mr. J. E. March, Superintendent of Government Settlements, met the passengers at the ‘Ruahine,’ and gave them all necessary information.”

Mr. March had met these people, and by doing so would appear to have given some official responsibility to this statement. One would like to know whether the Government recognised these people as small farmers, for it did not appear to him that they were the class of persons one would have expected.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was entering into debatable matter.

Mr. DUTHIE would withdraw the debatable matter. At the same time, he thought some explanation was desirable.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the honourable gentleman was very fond of using newspaper extracts to found questions on; but the honourable gentleman must not imagine that the Government were responsible for what appeared in the newspapers. The honourable gentleman was constantly in the habit of taking up the time of the House in asking questions relating to what appeared in the newspapers. In reply to this question, he might say that the Government had a telegram from the Agent-General, which had been since published, and which said that a certain number of persons, British farmers, were coming out in the “Ruahine,” and they had sent Mr. March up to meet these persons, because the Government were not in a position to say whether they were the persons sent out by the Agent-General or not. They found that they had been sent out by Mr. Courtney, whom the honourable gentleman no doubt knew, and they were going to the Taranaki District. No doubt Mr. Courtney had arranged for their settlement on the land; but, if not, perhaps the Government would be able to assist them. At any rate, the Government would assist as far as possible in getting homes in the country for people who were suitable. The regulations did not apply only to farmers, but also to persons who could prove to the Agent-General that they had a certain amount of means.

NAVAL AND MILITARY SETTLERS’ AND VOLUNTEERS’ CLAIMS.

Mr. MCGUIRE asked the Government,—(1) If it is their intention to bring in a Bill during

this session to further amend the Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Act? or (3) is it the intention of the Government to bar all claims, however just, because applications had not been received before the 31st March last? From the answer that had been given to the honourable member for Geraldine, he could hardly expect redress for those who were looking to the House for justice. They all knew that claims and petitions were coming in in very large numbers, and it seemed to him that all equitable and just claims should be considered, and no technicalities should be allowed to stand in their way. He thought it was a blot on the fair fame of the colony that men who had fought and bled for their country should not have their just claims recognised.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not introduce debatable matter.

Mr. McGUIRE said he would conform in every way to the ruling of the Speaker, and would only say that he trusted the Government would see their way to act in this matter so that justice should be done to all parties.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the Government had answered this question a dozen times this session, and the honourable gentleman was only wasting the time of the House in putting questions that had already been answered so often. It was not the intention of the Government to bring in any amending Bill. These claims would, no doubt, continue to come. They had been coming in for the last twenty years, and if the time were extended for another twenty years they would still come in. It was the law passed by that House which barred these claims, and not the Government.

Mr. McGUIRE asked whether the Government had not power to bring in a Bill to amend the Act and thus remove the bar.

Mr. J. McKENZIE would recommend the honourable member to bring in a Bill himself.

Mr. McGUIRE asked whether the Government would assist him to get it passed if he acted on the suggestion of the honourable gentleman.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the Government would take that into consideration.

Mr. McGUIRE would take the answer to mean that the Government would oppose,—which was a matter of deep regret to him.

CONSTABLES AND DETECTIVES.

Mr. PALMER asked the Minister of Defence, —(1.) When the Under-Secretary's report on defence will be down? (2.) Are the recommendations of last year's report—namely, to do away with the fourth grade in detectives and third grade in constables, and only have three grades in the former and two in the latter—to be given effect to in this year's report? (3.) If not granted to both constables and detectives, can the Government see its way to grant this concession to either of the above?

Mr. SEDDON said the report of the Commissioner was in the hands of the Printer, and he hoped it would be laid on the table in the course of a few hours. The recommendation

of last year had not been given effect to, and no provision was made on the estimates for giving effect to the report. The answer to part (3) of the question was that the matter was now under the consideration of the Government.

AUCKLAND FIREMEN AND DRIVERS.

Mr. SHERA asked the Minister for Public Works, Why firemen and drivers on the Auckland Section of railways are only allowed thirty minutes to prepare their engines each day, whereas drivers and firemen on the southern sections are allowed forty-five minutes to do the same work?

Mr. SEDDON replied that the regulations in regard to this matter were uniform throughout the colony.

NEW ZEALAND RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

Mr. SHERA asked the Minister of Defence, If he will place a sum of £1,000 on the estimates for prizes to be awarded at the next annual shooting competition of the New Zealand Rifle Association, thus following the example of New South Wales, where £2,000 had been voted for prizes for their Rifle Association?

Mr. SEDDON replied that the colony was at present giving assistance to the association to the extent of about £450 a year, and the Government thought that was sufficient.

TARANAKI ROADS.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, If they are aware of the wretched state of the tracks in the special-settled districts, and the miles of standing bush which are called roads on the maps in the Land Department at Wellington and the District Land Office at New Plymouth; and has their attention been ever called to the state of the Junction Road from Inglewood to Tarata, and of the East Road from Stratford to Coutts Swamp; and are they aware that these roads are arterial roads, and, notwithstanding this, ingress and egress is impossible; and, if the Government are aware of the facts as stated, what steps do they purpose taking, if not in the interest of the settlement of the country, at least in the interest of poor deluded humanity? He trusted that, now that the Government were in possession of the facts stated in the question, they would, at as early a date as possible, redress the wrongs under which the people in these districts were suffering. He hoped the answer would be more satisfactory than that which he had received to his last question.

Mr. J. McKENZIE could assure the honourable gentleman that the answer on this occasion would be a highly satisfactory one. The Government were well aware that the bad weather had caused the bush roads to be almost impassable not only in Taranaki, but throughout the whole of the North Island. They were also aware that there were miles of standing bush which were called roads not only in Taranaki, but also throughout the whole of the North Island. With regard to the road referred to in the honourable gentleman's ques-

Mr. McGuire

tion, he might say that it was under the control of the local bodies, but, nevertheless, several telegrams had been sent to the Government asking them to put it in repair. He did not know whether those telegrams had been inspired by the honourable gentleman, but it was possible they had been. This road was also reported to be in a bad state. It was the duty of course, of the Government to do what they could, and let the work be carried on as fast as the funds at the disposal of the Government, and the weather, would permit. There were two things essential—first that the Government should have the means, and secondly that they should have good weather. He would now point out what had been done for deluded humanity in that district. During the last financial year the Government had expended £13,124 on roads in the Taranaki District; £8,199 had been given to the districts in the shape of thirds; they had given the Harbour Board out of Land Fund £8,898; and they had liabilities existing at the 31st March, 1893, for works in progress, for which the Government were responsible, to the extent of £15,068: making a total for the Taranaki District of £43,979. It appeared to him that if the "deluded humanity" in the Taranaki District wanted more help the honourable gentleman must himself go into ways and means, and ask the House to supply him with money.

H.M.S. "VICTORIA."

Mr. ROLLESTON called the attention of the Premier to the report in the London *Times* of the 28th June of the messages received by the Secretary of State from the Australasian Colonies relating to the loss of H.M.S. "Victoria," from which it appears that in all cases except that of New Zealand the Governor was the means of communication with the Imperial Government, while in the case of New Zealand the Agent-General appears to have been instructed to communicate with the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office; and asked, What is the reason for the deviation from the usual course, by which the Governor of the colony has always been the recognised means of communication with the Imperial Government; and, further, whether any acknowledgment has been received of the expression of regret forwarded by both Houses of Parliament to His Excellency, for transmission to Her Majesty the Queen? He found in the London *Mail* of the 28th June the messages received by the Secretary of State for the Colonies with respect to the loss of the "Victoria" and the death of Admiral Tryon. There were one from Tasmania, one from Western Australia, one from New South Wales, one from Victoria, one from South Australia; and then there came one from New Zealand, a letter from the Agent-General to the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, as follows:—

"Sir,—I have the honour to request that you will inform the Marquis of Ripon that I have received a cablegram from my Government desiring me to express to him on their behalf the sincere regret of the people of New

Zealand at the loss of the brave crew of H.M.S. 'Victoria' and of Admiral Tryon, who was so well known and so deeply respected in the colony.—I have, &c.,

"W. B. PERCEVAL."

When an address was passed by that House to His Excellency the Governor requesting him to forward to Her Majesty the Queen an expression of regret for the sad loss of the "Victoria," the Premier informed the House that he had already sent a message to the Agent-General. It seemed to him at the time somewhat extraordinary, but he did not wish to interrupt proceedings which he thought should not be interrupted by a question.

Mr. SEDDON.—What is the *Hansard*?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—On page 19 of the first number of *Hansard* this year the Premier was reported to have said,—

"I may state that immediately the news reached me I took the opportunity of sending a cable message to the Agent-General, asking him to convey to the authorities at Home, on behalf of the Government, our expressions of regret and sorrow; but I think it would be well for the House to pass the resolution. I therefore move it."

The resolution was, he thought, couched in very proper terms, as coming from a branch of the Legislature, and requesting His Excellency to convey to Her Majesty the Queen an expression of regret at the event. It seemed to him not altogether inadvisable that they should bear in mind the position in which the Legislature was in a matter of that kind, and that they ought on such occasions to observe that dignity of procedure which the character of the occasion called for. He thought at the time that the proceeding was not one in keeping with the proper dignity of the House, nor was it appropriate to the occasion; but he did not on that occasion say anything. He now found, as he had said, from the London *Times* that New Zealand was the only colony which had gone outside the ordinary course by sending a telegraphic message to its Agent-General to place himself practically in the position of an ambassador to the court of England, and to approach that court in a way in which he did not think they, as a Parliament, ought to approach it—through the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office. He would like to know what was the reason for this divergence from the ordinary course. Two or three reasons had occurred to him as probably being the cause of this unusual course: one was the unusual character of the occurrence, and the fact that the Premier was not accustomed to deal with a question of that kind.

Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable gentleman was introducing debatable matter.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was perhaps raising points which might lead to debate.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he was only anxious to know the reason why this course was taken, because it was usual certainly for the Houses of Parliament to approach the Imperial Government through His Excellency the Governor,

and, so far as he was aware, it had always been the custom for the Governor to be the medium in such cases.

Mr. SPEAKER said every possible latitude would be extended to the honourable gentleman in courtesy to his position, but at the same time he could not allow the honourable gentleman to trespass too far on debatable matter.

Mr. SEDDON asked if he was to understand the honourable gentleman to complain that the resolution of the House was sent through the Agent-General instead of through the Governor.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said he was making inquiries as to what became of the resolution passed by the House.

Mr. ROLLESTON said that what he wanted to know was, how it came that the Agent-General was authorised to communicate with the Under-Secretary of the Colonial Office on a matter affecting the whole colony—in regard to an expression of regret of the whole people of New Zealand to the Imperial Government; and why they had passed over the Governor. He thought it was most important to know what were the relations we were getting into with the Colonial Office. The reason he asked this question particularly was that they had some little experience of the passing-over of the Governor and appealing direct to the Colonial Office. He trusted, however, that in this case he would learn that there had simply been a mistake, through want of knowledge on the part of the Premier. He thought, too, we ought not to turn our Agent-General into an ambassador.

Mr. SEDDON might say that he was rather surprised when he saw the question upon the Order Paper. Of course, as the honourable gentleman had shown, there had been no hiding from the public or honourable members what had transpired, because, in *Hansard*, page 19, at the conclusion of his remarks on the loss of the "Victoria," he (Mr. Seddon) was reported to have said,—

"I may state that immediately the news reached me I took the opportunity of sending a cable message to the Agent-General, asking him to convey to the authorities at Home on behalf of the Government our expressions of regret and sorrow; but I think it would be well for the House to pass the resolution. I therefore move it."

The resolution that was carried by the House was signed by the Speaker and sent to His Excellency the Governor, and no doubt it was transmitted by him to the Colonial Office. As regarded the telegram going from himself to the Agent-General, his explanation was very simple. When he saw the news in the paper, on going into his office he sent for the Secretary to the Cabinet, but that gentleman not being there he dictated to his Private Secretary a telegram of sympathy to be sent to the Colonial Office. He subsequently found that instead of the telegram going to His Excellency, as it ought to have done in the ordinary course, it was sent direct to the Agent-General.

Mr. Rolleston

Had the Secretary to the Cabinet been there to deal with this correspondence, of course the message would have been sent to His Excellency for transmission to the Colonial Office. As it was, it was sent direct to the Agent-General, and hence the error had arisen. Of course, that was rectified by the resolution of the House being sent as he had stated. He found out the mistake, and rectified it as far as he was able. As some doubt had been raised by the honourable gentleman in asking the question, he was very much pleased to say that the relations between His Excellency the Governor and his Advisers were of the most cordial character.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—That has nothing to do with it.

Mr. SEDDON said it had, because the honourable gentleman's remarks would lead honourable members to infer that the message had been sent to the Colonial Office over the head of His Excellency, ignoring his position. He took that opportunity of making that explanation.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—It was a mistake, in fact?

Mr. SEDDON.—It was quite a mistake.

RAINFALL.

Sir J. HALL asked the Government, Whether, with a view to making complete the return of the annual rainfall throughout the colony, the Government will provide for a record being kept of the rainfall at Taranaki, Nelson, Hokitika, and Westport? This was a matter of considerable importance to the country. The returns were incomplete, as indicated in his question. He believed the reason was the inability of the Museum authorities to provide a few shillings for the necessary rain-gauges. He hoped the Government would recognise the importance of this matter, and provide the small sum required for the purchase of a few extra instruments.

Mr. J. McKENZIE thought the cause of there not being these extra stations was not so much the want of funds for rain-gauges, but the difficulty of getting suitable persons to attend to the work. Inquiries were being made to see whether they could not get some of the officers at the places referred to to perform the work, and if they could do it the duty would be undertaken at once.

SOUTH ISLAND LANDLESS NATIVES.

Mr. PARATA asked the Premier, When the Government will take the necessary steps to complete arrangements for providing land for the landless Natives in the South Island, also for those members of the Native race in the same part of the colony who have not sufficient land for their maintenance? The Natives had not yet received any definite reply from the Government as to what they intended to do in this matter.

Mr. CARROLL said the Government intended at an early period to take the steps necessary for bringing this whole question to a close, but the honourable gentleman was aware

that lists were coming in every day of the names of Natives to be included in the schedule, and justice would not be done if the lists were closed at the present time. It was the intention of the Government to take this matter in hand and complete it once and for all as soon as the session was over.

WAIRARAPA LAKE.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, Whether the Government intend to take any action to give effect to the report of the Royal Commission upon the claims of Natives to the Wairarapa lakes and adjacent lands, furnished to both Houses of the Legislature by command of His Excellency, and printed in the Appendices, Sess. II., 1891, G.-4? The Natives were very anxious to know what was the intention of the Government in reference to the report of the Commission.

Mr. CARROLL said the decision of this matter was hung up pending the result of litigation. The case was *sub judice*, an appeal having been made to the Privy Council. He might say that the Government were anxious at one time to see the Natives with the view of settling this matter, but the Natives, although they knew the intentions of the Government, did not approach them, preferring rather to go into Court.

D. B. ORCHARD.

Mr. PALMER asked the Government,—(1.) If they have yet considered the case of the excessive and extreme sentence passed upon D. B. Orchard in Auckland four years ago, and have they compared that sentence of seven years with other sentences passed at the same time for similar offences, such other sentences being only for three years? (2.) Can the Government reconcile these differences in sentences for similar offences? (3.) Will they do anything to remove this anomaly by remitting the remainder of Orchard's sentence now that he has served so long, and while others who were sentenced for greater offences at the same time that he was sentenced are at liberty? This was a serious question, and was one which was agitating a good many people in Auckland. He might call the Minister's attention to the two sentences passed at the time referred to in his question. Dean was sentenced to three years, and also Rawlings, who had robbed widows and orphans, for he had taken the funds of an orphan asylum. There was no difference between these two cases, excepting in the one fact that in Orchard's case nobody expected him to meet the bills, and he renewed the bills by forging signatures to them, and, as a money-lender, he had made use of the money that had been accumulating in his hands. His offence was really small in comparison with the offences of these others. He would point out to the Minister the extraordinary anomaly in the sentences in these cases. In the two cases he had mentioned the prisoners received sentences of three years only for greater offences, while Orchard got a sentence which really amounted to imprison-

ment for life. He was a very old man, and if the sentence were not commuted he must really end his days in prison. Universal sympathy had been expressed with the man in the city where the facts were known and where the trial took place, and one of the persons who expressed his sympathy when he heard of the sentence was actually the prosecutor himself. Petitions had been before the House on the matter; and the Visiting Justices at Auckland,—amongst whom he believed was one of the members of the House,—after making all inquiries, recommended the Government over a year ago to take the case into consideration, and remit the sentence of this unfortunate man. In view of the difference between the sentences he had mentioned, he hoped that the Government would see their way to remit the remainder of the sentence in the case of Orchard. He would like to know how the Government reconciled the difference between the sentences, if they did persist in keeping this unfortunate man in gaol.

Mr. REEVES would remind the honourable gentleman that Parliament was not a Court of Criminal Appeal, nor was that House a Court constituted to revise the sentences passed by the Courts of the colony.

Mr. PALMER questioned that.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Minister is going into debatable matter.

Mr. REEVES said that might be answered by the statement that the speech which the honourable member had just delivered was debatable as regarded the particular case of Orchard. He was a man who was in a good position, and he was found guilty of no less than nine offences of forgery. That being so, the Government, he was sorry to say, did not see their way to recommend any remission.

Mr. PALMER said the Minister had not answered the second part of the question, which had been forgotten: How did the Government reconcile these differences in the sentences? There were nine charges in Orchard's case, and nine charges also in the other case he had mentioned.

Mr. REEVES said it was not the duty of the Government to reconcile apparent anomalies in the sentences passed by Judges of the Supreme Court.

PALMERSTON NORTH COURTHOUSE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Government,—(1.) If they submitted the plans of the Palmerston North Courthouse to the District Court/Judge and the Resident Magistrate before the selection of the present plan was made; and (2), if they did submit them, did those gentlemen approve of the selection?

Mr. SEDDON said the plans were not submitted to the Magistrate or the Judge, but the plans were submitted to the Under-Secretary for Justice, who, together with the Chief Architect, the Engineer-in-Chief, and the Under-Secretary for Works, made a selection from the number of plans that were submitted; and he might say that he went through the matter

very carefully himself, and he was satisfied the best design was the one selected.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE ADVANCES.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Colonial Treasurer, If the Government will consider the propriety of reducing the rate of interest charged by the Insurance Department on advances of £500 and over, from the present rate of 7 per cent.? On a former occasion he put a question on the same subject to the Colonial Treasurer, and he found that he was reported to have said that the interest charged on advances made to policyholders was 5 per cent. If he was correctly reported, he was in error in that respect. The rate of interest charged by the Government Life Insurance Department, and probably by the other life insurance offices, was 7 per cent. As to the question he had now to put to the Government, it suggested the propriety of reducing the rate of interest upon advances of £500 and upwards. It must be considered that the security was unexceptionable, because the advances by the department were made on moneys already paid by the borrowers by way of premiums upon insurances on their own lives. No doubt there was a difficulty as to dealing with the smaller advances, but there should be none as to the larger sums, such as £500 and over.

Mr. SEDDON said the question of the honourable gentleman no doubt referred to policies over £500. The rate of interest on loans of £500 on mortgage of property was only 6½ per cent. As already explained, policy loans were repayable at any time in one sum, or in instalments of £5, or they might run on indefinitely at the option of the borrower. Seven per cent. was the lowest rate charged by the other offices in the colony, and it would to some extent unfairly handicap the New Zealand Government Insurance Department if they were to reduce it. The answer in other respects would be the same as the answer given to a similar question some time ago, and recorded on page 542 of the first volume of *Hansard* of this session.

ROTORUA SANATORIUM.

Mr. KELLY asked the Government, If they are aware that the baths and buildings at the Rotorua Sanatorium are leaky and otherwise unsuitable for tourists: and will the Government place a sufficient sum on the estimates to make the necessary alterations, so as to provide for the great influx of tourists expected to visit the thermal district on the completion of the railway? He might state that the baths and bathing accommodation at present were not sufficient. Last season during the summer months a great number of tourists had to wait, some of them an hour at a time, for their turn at the baths. The buildings were leaky, and he was informed by people who had been there lately that it was very uncomfortable to take baths there. He had put the question on the Order Paper simply in order to draw the attention of the Government to the position. The Sanatorium building, of course, was all

Mr. Seddon

right, having been erected only a year or two ago. The bathing accommodation was inferior, and if something was not done this summer there would certainly not be sufficient accommodation for the people resorting to the baths.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that the information which had come from Rotorua was to the effect that, in consequence of the very heavy rains which had taken place there, there was some leakage at the baths, and steps had been taken at once to have the baths repaired.

Mr. KELLY asked for an answer to the second part of the question.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE did not know whether he would be accused by his colleagues of divulging part of the Public Works Statement, but, at any rate, he might say that the Government intended to provide for the alterations referred to.

TREE-PLANTING.

Mr. BRUCE asked the Government, Whether, with a view to the encouragement of tree-planting, they will give any assistance to some of the larger horticultural societies in the colony? He had been induced to place this question on the Order Paper in consequence of a resolution having been passed by a large and important society in this Island, and also in consequence of a request that he would bring the matter under the attention of the Government. Although this question of tree-planting was considered, and rightly so, to be a very important matter, yet, knowing as he did the difficulties which surrounded the question—that was to say, so far as monetary assistance by the Government was concerned—he would not give any expression of opinion on the matter. He just wished, in consequence of the request to which he had alluded, to elicit an expression of opinion from the Government upon it. They might, at any rate, take it into consideration, and see if they could assist in any way in this direction.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this matter had been considered by the department, but up to the present they had not been able to devise means by which to do anything in the matter. However, the matter was still under consideration, and he hoped to be able to do something ultimately.

LEASE-IN-PERPETUITY SELECTORS.

Mr. C. H. MILLS asked the Minister of Lands, If he will make such arrangements as will obviate a selector under the lease-in-perpetuity clause of the Land Act paying the whole amount of survey-fee in one sum? Under the lease-in-perpetuity clause of the Land Act a selector had to pay down a very large sum of money in survey-fees; and he thought, if any arrangement could be made whereby the selector could have the amount of the survey added to the capital value of the land, and pay on that basis, it would be highly conducive to permanent settlement.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the selector of land under the lease-in-perpetuity system did not require to pay for the survey at all if the land had been already surveyed; and, if he applied

for unsurveyed land, section 63 of the Land Act required the amount of the survey-fee to be deposited with the application; but this was not considered to be a hardship, as the amount was credited towards the first rent that was to be paid.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—But it is a large sum.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that of course any person putting down that sum had nothing more to pay in the shape of rent until that sum was exhausted. He did not see that they could possibly get out of the difficulty.

PATTESSON'S ESTATE.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether he will give effect to the recommendation of the M to Z Committee in the matter of the petition *re* Pattesson's estate? In this matter of Pattesson's petition the Commissioner of Stamps claimed probate duty upon a sum of £2,943, which had no existence in fact, as part of this estate: the money had been lost, and had been improperly included in the statement by the attorneys. The matter had been before the Public Petitions Committee, which unanimously recommended that the prayer of the petition be granted—that was, that an amended statement might be made as to the value of the estate subject to probate; and all he wanted to know from the Government was, whether they intended to give effect to the recommendation of the Committee, because the estate was locked up, and must so remain until their decision should be given.

Mr. REEVES said the matter was under the consideration of the Cabinet. There were two other somewhat similar cases; one of these cases was that of Scott; and the whole of them would be considered together by the Government.

WESTPORT COLLIERY RESERVES.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Government, Whether they will lay before this House the plan referred to in the report of the Commissioners upon the subject of the Westport Colliery Reserves; also a copy of the evidence taken by the Commissioners? They had on the table a report from Messrs. Greenville and Bond, who were appointed Commissioners to inquire into the position of the West Coast colliery reserves. In this report they referred frequently to certain sections and boundary leases. It was not possible, however, to obtain a clear conception of the purport of the report without the plan. He therefore asked that a copy of the plan might be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said there was no objection whatever to laying a copy of the plan on the table of the House, and he would be very glad to do it. He would also be glad to lay a copy of the evidence on the table of the House, but he hoped they would not be asked to have it printed, because the amount of printing they had to do was really getting beyond all bounds. If the honourable gentleman would be satisfied to have a copy of the manuscript laid upon the table he would be glad to furnish it.

DUNEDIN BURGESS ROLL.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Premier,—(1.) If his attention has been called to the proceedings regarding the burgess roll in the City Council of Dunedin on the 2nd August instant, and reported in the *Otago Daily Times* of the 3rd August instant? (2.) Is he aware that fifty-two claims to be enrolled on the burgess roll were made, that the City Council Valuer declined to certify them as correct, but a majority of the Council allowed them, and that amongst these claims there were the following: eleven claims in respect of one lease, which had been subdivided, a brewer claiming for his son, his son's wife, and his bottler in respect of his bottling-house, for his cooper in respect of a shed, and for five or six others for other portions of his property? (3.) Will he, in any amending Municipal Act, make provision for either allowing all adult males and females resident in a city or borough to be enrolled as burgesses, whether they are lessees or owners of land or not; or, failing that, for an appeal to some Court against the City Council's decisions on revision of the roll; so that the system of creating bogus voters may be prevented? In putting this question he wished just to state the facts which led him to put it. In the *Otago Daily Times* of the 3rd August there appeared an account of a meeting of the City Council of Dunedin. That meeting was called by notice dated the 25th July, notifying that the claims of persons who desired to be enrolled on the burgess roll must be sent in before five p.m. on the 1st August. The meeting was to take place at half-past seven on the 2nd August; and he understood there were fifty-two claims lodged that the Town Clerk or the city valuer declined to certify as correct. The claims were new claims, put in the day before the Council met, and, as he understood, the Council did not see them till the meeting. Among these claims there were claims of this character: For example, a brewer had given a lease of part of his property to his wife, another part to his son, another part to his son's wife, another to an assistant, another to a cooper, another to his bottler, another to a servant, another to a labourer, another, he believed, to a domestic servant or to her mother. Another brewer's accountant had got a lease of property where he was not living from a brewer's labourer. As the House was aware, there must be a lease for more than six months' duration before a name could be put on the rolls. Well, a person gave a sublease, say, for twelve months, and it turned out that the lease itself had only two or three days to run, and yet the sublessee was entitled to get on the roll and vote. It seemed to him that the matter was getting so serious that if they were to have pure rolls they must legislate in either of two ways: either all adult males and females should be allowed to be put on the rolls, or, failing that, some independent Court should be set up, so that the burgess lists might be revised, and that a majority who might be, as the phrase went, of one colour should

not be allowed to poll bogus votes on any question.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member would, no doubt, understand what he meant when he said he had not had time to peruse the Otago newspapers, and, consequently, had not seen the report to which the honourable gentleman had referred. But, taking for granted what had appeared and what the honourable gentleman had said, it showed the necessity for widening the franchise in a given direction, and he hoped, before many hours were over, to show the honourable gentleman that the matter had not been forgotten by the Government.

CORRESPONDENCE WITH AGENT-GENERAL.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked the Premier, if he will inform the House of the circumstances which have caused the delay in furnishing the return, ordered by the House on the 18th July, of copies of correspondence with the Agent-General on the subject of assistance to small farmers, and on other subjects? The question was put simply to draw from the Premier the reason for delay in furnishing returns of this kind. He did not wish to press the question, because he believed, from what had been said, that the Premier had done his best, since he spoke about the matter, to get it done. But he could not understand the position of departments which did not promptly reply to parliamentary orders for returns.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that since he took his seat that afternoon the return had arrived. He might explain to the honourable gentleman that they had such a quantity of these things to attend to, with only the same staff of officers as they had during the recess, that they could not get the returns up so quickly as they would like. The return to hand was a very large one, and very well got up, and, with the permission of the House, he would lay it on the table and move that it be printed.

Motion agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. FISH moved the adjournment of the House. He did so for the reason that the question asked by the honourable member for Inangahua, and answered by the Premier, was likely to lead to a wrong impression. It might be thought, from the manner in which the question was put, that the City Council of Dunedin were guilty of doing an improper and illegal act, and had actually placed bogus voters on the rolls of the city. The honourable member for Inangahua, in asking his question, very discreetly did not say that, but he made reference, in a most offensive manner, to a body which, he (Mr. Fish) ventured to say, did its duty to the public as well as any other public body in the colony. Neither had the question been put as fairly as it might be. He presumed the honourable member for Inangahua knew no more than he did himself of the matter, and that was what had appeared in the Otago daily papers. This was what appeared to have occurred: A number of claims were

made on a certain date, and they were considered by the City Council at its meeting on last Wednesday week. The Town Clerk, unfortunately, happened to be absent, and his duties were fulfilled by his assistant. That did not signify much. These claims, as the honourable gentleman stated, were sent in only the day before, and therefore the city valuer had not had time to ascertain whether the whole of the claims for insertion on the ratepayers' roll were regular or not; but, in the course of the discussion, the Assistant Town Clerk was asked by a member of the City Council whether the claims were legal. His reply was that they were all legal, but had not been examined. Now, he was free to admit it would have been very much wiser of the Council to have refrained from placing these names on the roll until the committee had time to go through them, or until the Town Clerk had returned. But, inasmuch as they were told they were legal, they had a perfect right to admit them on that roll. The honourable gentleman stated that one man—a brewer—had placed eleven names on the roll. Whether that was true or not he (Mr. Fish) did not know, neither did he think the honourable gentleman knew himself; and he thought it was rash of any honourable gentleman, more particularly one who occupied the position of the honourable member for Inangahua, to bring a question of this kind before the House, with a view to injure very seriously the Council against whom it was directed, until he had made himself quite sure of his facts by something more than a newspaper report of the case. The honourable gentleman had spoken of six names of a brewer's family and employees simply because he posed in that House as the representative of the temperance party. Now, the law on the subject was this: that any person producing a stamped agreement for six months for a piece of property in the City of Dunedin could demand to have his name placed on the Burgess roll; and if these persons, supposing the statement of the honourable gentleman to be true, produced these agreements properly stamped, no power the City Council had could prevent their being placed on the roll. And he could inform the honourable gentleman of this: that, when he (Mr. Fish) was contesting the mayoralty election a few months ago, eighty or ninety temperance people went to the Council offices and enrolled themselves two or three days before the election, and produced stamped agreements, which were only got up for the purpose of voting against himself. The honourable gentleman had a fling at the Council. He insinuated improprieties on their part, and he did it in order to show what naughty people they were because, as he supposed, they were working for the brewers' party. But the honourable gentleman quite forgot the other facts he had mentioned. Then, they were told by the honourable gentleman that it should be a lesson to the Government to introduce legislation which would give every resident of Dunedin a right to vote at municipal elections. Of course the honourable gentleman was not satisfied

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with destroying one great interest in the colony, but he would like to have the roll composed of persons who had not the slightest interest in the city, in order to hand over the city finances and the management of its affairs to an irresponsible body of electors. He trusted the time was far distant when the Government would listen to such a proposition; and, if they did, he trusted the good sense of that House would give such a proposal very short shrift indeed. The honourable gentleman proposed to do away with all the safeguards to property. He did not know whether the Premier meant to indicate by his answer, short as it was, that there was a Bill coming in to give effect to that, but, if he did, then he would tell the Premier when that time came that, in his humble judgment, the honourable gentleman was quite unfit to occupy the position he held.

Mr. SEDDON.—I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. FISH was glad to hear the Premier make this disclaimer now. It was unfair, injudicious, and improper of the honourable member for Inangahua to do what he had done. If he had been an ordinary member of the House he would not take any notice of it at all; but it was very unfair of the honourable gentleman to put a question on the Order Paper such as this, which was calculated to cast a very grave reflection on the City Council of Dunedin. Now, so far as he (Mr. Fish) was concerned, he thought the only fault the City Council had committed was in being rather hasty in admitting these claims. At the same time, they could not help doing so, after the Assistant Town Clerk had said the claims were legal.

Sir R. STOUT.—When did he say that?

Mr. FISH.—At the meeting.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. FISH.—Well, I think you will see it in one of the reports.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. FISH said the whole of the claims were not put on the roll. There were some left over for future consideration. But, whether that was so or not, if any persons were put on the roll, and improperly put there, they could be struck out by recourse to the Supreme Court. The honourable gentleman should not have brought this question up without thoroughly acquainting himself with the facts; and he was sorry that the honourable gentleman should go out of his way to cast a reflection on the City Council of a place where he had resided so long. Bogus votes should not be allowed, no doubt, although there were bogus votes and bogus voters; and, if current rumour was correct, there had been sitting in that House, as Colonial Treasurer, with precedence, a gentleman who owed his election to that House in consequence of a bogus vote having been created for him. He believed Sir Julius Vogel for three years could only enter the House and sit upon those benches by the creation of a vote for a property with which he had really nothing to do. Who the gentleman was who was kind enough to give Sir Julius that vote he would

not say, but it only showed that when the law allowed it the Court awarded it, and that one person was just as ready to take advantage of the law as another, and if to do this was wrong the law must be altered. But there was nothing wrong in the law. The law was that, if a person had a stamped agreement for a six months' tenancy, he had a right to demand to have his name placed on the roll; and surely those who advocated that the right to be placed on the roll should be given to every citizen should not grumble at that right being given and exercised by six persons who could produce stamped agreements as occupiers of property for six months. He felt it to be his duty to get up in his place and resent, not so much what the honourable gentleman said in asking the question, but the manner in which the question itself was put.

Sir R. STOUT said he should indulge the honourable member for Dunedin City by seconding his motion for adjournment. He was glad the honourable gentleman had not ventured to dispute the facts he (Sir R. Stout) gave to the House. He could not very well do so, when there was the following report from the Town Clerk. He would read part of the report referring to these bogus votes:—

"In the remaining fifty-two cases the city valuer declines to certify to their correctness. All these claims were accompanied with the ordinary agreements for lease duly stamped and executed; but in many of them the facts known to the valuer do not bear out the statements contained in these documents, and therefore throw a natural suspicion over the whole; besides which the valuer finds, when making up the valuation-lists, that, notwithstanding these agreements, in many cases the tenants have not continued in occupation of the properties 'leased' to them. It is a question for the Council to decide, whether to cause further inquiry to be made or to accept the agreements submitted as sufficient evidence to justify the admission of the claims."

And the Town Clerk or Acting Town Clerk never said the claims were legal. He was simply asked if they were in form, and he said they were all in form but one—not a word about their legality. What had happened? This had happened: that the Dunedin City Council had recently, without investigation,—though their own officer told them the claims were wrong,—allowed these bogus votes to be put on the roll. The reason for it was perfectly obvious. Unfortunately for the City Council there was a majority in it who had certain views on the licensing question, and that majority had allowed a brewer to put six bogus voters on the City of Dunedin roll. Bogus voters were a disgrace to any cause. Fancy a brewer putting his bottler on the roll as lessee of his bottling-house, his cooper as lessee of his cooperage, and his drayman for a part of his property, and his labourer, and his labourer's wife, and then his own wife, and then his own son, then his brewer's assistant, and then a domestic and her mother! And this was the kind of thing which this paragon of perfection

the Dunedin City Council had allowed. There were other brewers who had come forward with leases equally invalid and bogus. There was the accountant of one who got a sublease from an employé of the firm. He himself lived out of the city, but he was put on as a ratepayer of the city on account of his sublease. Then, another case consisted of several persons who lived, not in the city, but in the North-east Valley and on Maori Hill. Being brewers' employés, they were put on; and in one sublease the lease itself expired within three or four days, and was actually advertised for sale, but the Council enrolled that sublease as if the sublessee was entitled to the property. It was the duty of any member who saw the law so prostituted to bring the matter before the House, in order that legislation might step in and stop this creation of bogus votes. The only way in which to do that was either to say that all residents should have the franchise, or, if not, then to create some Court which would purge the rolls, and not trust it to a chance majority of the City Council. He had not been asked to bring this forward by temperance people at all. He had had letters on the subject—not from the temperance people—stating the facts; but he was willing to take the papers as his guide, and those who looked at the papers would see the class of people who were permitted to be placed on the roll.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he would not occupy the House many minutes; but he had not an opportunity of speaking upon the question in the reply given to the honourable member for Egmont's question, No. 8. He would have asked the Government the same question in a different way; but, at the same time, he had always been willing, and was so now, to give the very greatest credit to the Minister of Lands for all he had done in his (Mr. Smith's) district. But he did disagree with him in the report that he had read to the House as to the large amount of money that had been expended in their district, as this was one-sided. It did not state the large amount of revenue the Government was receiving in anticipation of the settlement going on: so it was an unfair report.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member was now referring to a previous debate on the question of the adjournment of the House, and he could not be permitted to do so.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said he had upon the table in front of him a large number of letters from settlers up the Junction Road. There had recently been the very heaviest floods in that district ever known to the white man. A large number of Canterbury settlers had taken up land there, and the roads were in a very deplorable condition. The officers of the Lands Department in New Plymouth and Wellington had been communicated with, and attention had been drawn to the urgency of the case. The bridge over the Waitara, at Tarata, which had cost \$1,000, was in very great danger. The local bodies had no funds whatever to repair the damage that had been done, and if this bridge happened to get destroyed the settlers

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up there would be cut off from all communication. If the Minister only read the letters he would see that it was a very distressing case. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), and the honourable member for Heathcote, who had been up there, could testify that these people were in a deplorable condition. The roads were blocked. Of course he did not say it was the fault of the Government, but he hoped the Government would not again bring forward these large figures showing the sums expended there, because there was a large amount of settlement going on there. There was no district so capable of absorbing the surplus population of the colony as the district which he had the honour to represent. No district deserved more encouragement than that. There were millions of acres of land there waiting to be settled, and the only drawback was the want of roads. He hoped, notwithstanding the amount that had been spent there, the House would take the matter into its favourable consideration and make ample and wise provision for that district when the estimates came down. He was anxiously waiting for the estimates, to see if the Government would—as they ought to do—recognise the importance of the district, and do justice to it.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said one did not like to say much about the Council of the city which one had the honour to represent, because it seemed rather a family matter, but it was impossible for any person to defend, by any specious reasoning, this creation of bogus votes. There was no question whatever but that these gentlemen had attempted to swamp the Burgess roll with bogus votes. When his honourable colleague said, "Surely you do not object to every one having a vote," he could only reply that he did not object to that, and he would like much that every citizen in Dunedin had a vote, but what he and others objected to was a selection—and such a selection as this—being made by bogus means. It was absolutely necessary that something should be done to put a stop to such procedure. He thought, when the Premier first spoke, that he was going to do something, but the honourable gentleman afterwards said that he was not going to do anything.

Mr. SEDDON said what he had referred to was not the Municipal Corporations Bill, but the Control of Liquors Bill.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said that had nothing to do with the question. He merely rose to say that the honourable member for Inangahua had done the right and proper thing in bringing such a state of things under the notice of the House, because this was a species of corruption which could not be allowed to go on for any length of time.

Mr. McGUIRE had to thank his honourable colleague the member for New Plymouth for having put the matter so well to the House. The Minister of Lands, he thought, had not given an at all satisfactory answer, and should not have replied in the manner he did when the member was simply doing his duty, and only

asking for what he conceived to be right and just. He had been continually met with hostility by the honourable gentleman. However, it was for the House to consider whether the honourable gentleman's actions were in keeping with the position of a Minister of the Crown, when it was remembered that the people for whom he had been pleading had been put on the land by the honourable gentleman. It seemed to him that Ministers were never satisfied unless honourable members were continually toadying to them, and talking about how New Zealand was progressing under their wise and prudent administration. Ministers should be thankful to an independent member for telling them the truth. He had always done justice to the Minister of Lands, and had given him every credit for a desire to settle the land, but he had been continually met with hostility by the honourable gentleman. And why was he met with hostility? Because he found it necessary, in the interest of the colony, to point out the weak points in the settlement of the country. He had honestly tried to help the honourable gentleman in carrying out his land-settlement policy, but he could tell the honourable gentleman and the House that the settlement would be a failure unless the honourable gentleman acted very differently. When the honourable gentleman spoke of the amount of money that had been expended in his (Mr. McGuire's) electorate—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not refer to a previous debate.

Mr. MCGUIRE would then only ask the honourable gentleman to lay the statement he had read on the table, because he contended that the amount of money stated there had never been expended in the direction the honourable gentleman mentioned. He knew where £25,000 of the funds of which the honourable gentleman spoke was appropriated.

Mr. SPEAKER must again tell the honourable gentleman that he could not refer to a previous debate.

Mr. MCGUIRE would then refer to what had fallen from the honourable member for New Plymouth. He was of the opinion that every consideration should be shown to people in outlying districts who were trying to make homes for themselves, and who, he considered, were the lifeblood of this country, and the backbone on which the country must rely. It was very wrong for any Government to neglect those people who were trying under difficulties to remain upon the land. There was nothing that he had told the Minister of Lands which that honourable gentleman did not know was required,—or at least he should know. He hoped the Minister would yet consider, before it was too late, what was due to the people whom he had settled on the land, because, if not, the only conclusion they could come to was that he had placed them there on false pretences, because those settlements would be a failure unless they had roads and bridges. He would not take up the time of the House, as he had a question on the Order Paper to be answered on the following day with reference to certain

matters affecting his constituency and the colony, and if a favourable answer was given to that question it would be in the interest of economy, and be the means of giving relief to the settlers. They would then be able to take advantage of good weather if they had any in the future. He would not say any more until he brought forward his question.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would like to say a few words in reply to the honourable member for Egmont. That honourable gentleman had accused him of acting unbecomingly as a Minister of the Crown. Of course, the honourable gentleman, if that was his opinion, had a right to test the feeling of the House by moving a vote of want of confidence in him as Minister of Lands; and, if the honourable gentleman carried that, then it would be for him to assume the position which he (Mr. McKenzie) now occupied, if he could. Then the honourable gentleman could provide for the wants of all these people whose needs he had so much at heart. He would like to know what would satisfy the honourable gentleman. Could any gentleman in the House tell him what would satisfy the honourable member for Egmont in regard to the district he represented? He did not believe that the whole of the money now at the disposal of the Government would satisfy the honourable gentleman. Did any other honourable gentleman think that nothing was to be spent in any other part of the colony except Egmont?

Hon. MEMBERS.—Yes.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Then, the honourable member for Egmont ought to be occupying the position of Minister of Lands, and then he could spend all the money at the disposal of the Government in his district. He (Mr. McKenzie) had endeavoured to do justice to the Egmont District, and the honourable gentleman knew it well. He had no doubt that all this noise that the honourable gentleman was making was for a purpose: he wanted the people of the district to believe that all the money which had been expended in the district had not been expended there. But it was plain it was only intended to influence the next election. The honourable gentleman said that he (Mr. McKenzie) had acted in a manner hostile to him. Well, there was no member for whom he had done so much as for the honourable member for Egmont. He would not refer to all that he had done for the honourable gentleman, but he recollected going on the platform in the honourable gentleman's district and addressing the electors there on his behalf, when the honourable gentleman was afraid to do it himself. He thought there was no hostility in that, and the less the honourable gentleman said about hostility the better. The honourable gentleman had answered his own argument when he said that the weather had been so bad that no roads could be made, and yet he accused the Minister of Lands of neglect for not doing this work. No doubt it had been impossible that anything could be done, and the honourable gentleman knew it perfectly well, and it would be much better if he would

take a more reasonable course. The Government did not want his vote, and if the honourable gentleman wished to ride the high horse, or get on a rail, or do anything else he was quite at liberty to do so. He could tell the honourable gentleman that if he wanted to get anything for his district he had better take a more reasonable course.

Mr. FERGUS said the Minister of Lands had worn the hobnailed boots in a way he had never seen it done before. The honourable gentleman might have allowed the honourable member for Egmont to go away with a little kudos, to serve during the forthcoming elections. Before he addressed himself to the question before the House he would like to say a word or two as a matter of personal explanation. Some Wairarapa people had been circulating certain reports with regard to his conduct when in charge of the Justice Department, and he thought it only right to put before the public now the true facts of the case as plainly as possible. On one occasion a man named William Riddle petitioned the House because the Magistrate had fined him \$75 for a breach of the Customs Duties Act. That was in July, 1888, and the petition was sent to him, as Minister of Justice, asking him to remit the fine. On the 30th July, according to a note in his book, the petition was referred to the Magistrate, to the Customs authorities, and to the police, to see if any recommendation could be made in the case, and if a remission could be granted. Then a reply was sent to Riddle that the remission could not be granted. People of the baser sort hailing from Masterton had said that not only was there delay in the answer, but that the answer was curt and insulting. The manner in which the man was insulted was this. The stereotyped answer to all applications for remissions of this character was sent to him. The form used was this: "Sir, I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of such a date, and I am directed by the Minister of Justice to inform you that, having carefully considered the matter, the Government regret that they cannot see their way to accede to your petition." That was the reply sent back to Riddle. It may have been insulting; but he failed to see where the insult came in, because, if it were so, he had been insulted by the Government times innumerable in regard to requests that he had made, and which had been answered in exactly the same manner. He had been charged by these fellows of a baser sort with sending an insulting letter in reply; but, as a matter of fact, he might mention that he never sent a reply at all. The reply was sent by the official head of the department, by authority of the Minister of Justice. It was the usual official reply. Then, they were told that this man had been cruelly and brutally ill-treated, that he was the victim of a conspiracy, that, instead of being a sinner, he had been very grossly sinned against, and that the hard-hearted Minister of Justice would not accede to his prayer. A petition was presented to the House in 1891

Mr. J. McKensie

from this same gentleman, complaining that he had been wrongly found guilty, and praying the House to grant him relief. The Public Petitions Committee to whom was referred this petition was composed of the following gentlemen: Messrs. Earnshaw, Fish, Houston, J. Kelly, C. H. Mills, McGuire, Moore, Swan, J. W. Thomson, and W. P. Reeves; and that Committee, after inquiring into the circumstances, reported that they had no recommendation to make. It was scarcely wise at all times to make much out of such things; but there were evil-minded people in the colony who always measured other people's corn by their own bushel, and who seemed unable to lift themselves out of the filth in which they had been so long accustomed to wallow. He had thought it right to draw the attention of the House and the country to the facts of this case. He might have something to say about this matter at a later stage of the session. Now he came to the question really before the Committee—that was, as to the names which were said to be almost illegally upon the Burgess list of the City of Dunedin. He would be sorry if one-tenth of what had been spoken by the honourable member for Inangahua was true. He was very sorry that any man or any body of men should so misuse the municipal roll as had been stated. He knew that some of his own relatives had been asked, not by the brewers' party, but by the opposite party, to allow their names to be placed on the Burgess roll, but they very properly declined. No cause could ever prosper if such means were used in its support; but there had been no proof submitted in the present case yet. He did not think the honourable member for Inangahua had produced one jot of proof. He would like to see a communication sent to the Dunedin City Council calling their attention to the fact that certain statements had been made in the House, and asking them to make a thorough investigation of the matter. He thought the citizens of Dunedin had a perfect right to demand that a Committee should be set up, and that a searching investigation should be made into the charges. He had not the slightest doubt that good would result from so doing. He did not suppose for a moment that the gentlemen composing the Dunedin City Council were men who would lend themselves to ways that were dark. He believed they were just as honourable men as members of that House. He did think it was the bounden duty of the citizens of Dunedin to say that the Council should investigate the matter, and prove or disprove the statements that had been made.

Mr. HOGG would not have risen had it not been for the language used by the last speaker in reference to some of the most respected residents in the district which he represented. The honourable member had referred to a petition which had been presented, and he had designated, with his usual offensiveness—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not make use of that expression.

Mr. HOGG would withdraw the term and use a milder expression. The honourable member

had designated the individuals who had signed the petition as "fellows of the baser sort."

Mr. FERGUS said he never did anything of the sort. He said that a certain number of persons of the baser sort had circulated the rumours. He believed that the gentlemen who signed the petition were, almost without exception,—he believed he might say without exception,—honourable men.

Mr. HOGG said the honourable gentleman had got out of the difficulty in a most ingenious manner, but he thought when the honourable member referred to certain persons of the baser sort circulating rumours of the character he alluded to he ought to be in a position to mention who the individuals of the baser sort were. He would like to know what was the definition of the term "baser." He did not know what constituted the baser sort according to the honourable member for Wakatipu. He did not know whether the honourable member considered that people who were in the habit of hectoring and bullying and browbeating belonged to the baser sort. If he did, he should say that the honourable gentleman's charitable remarks would not have very far to travel. This petition related to the cruel and heartless persecution of a man named Riddle, who kept a boardinghouse at Taueru. On a certain evening three constables, one from Greytown, another from Carterton, and the other from Masterton, picked up one another on the way, and started at an early hour in the night, and travelled out to this man's place, and there they met with some individual, whose name had never transpired, who conducted them to a place at the back of the boardinghouse. One of the constables struck a match, and called the attention of the others to the fact that in a pigsty, openly exposed to view, were deposited some portions of a distilling apparatus. How the constables had been led there—whether by intuitive instinct or not—he was not prepared to say; but the facts were as he had stated. The thing was transparent to every one who listened to the case in Court, and the opinion that prevailed now all over the district was that somebody had deposited the articles there in order that the police should find them—that, in fact, the police knew all about it, and that it was a plot of a most absurd character. Notwithstanding that, under a very drastic clause in the Distillation Act, the Resident Magistrate considered it to be his duty, inasmuch as a portion of some distilling apparatus had been found on the man's premises, to fine him £75. It was against this iniquitous infliction that nearly the whole community protested. He thought what he had said had been borne out by the reply which had just been made by the honourable member for Wakatipu: that, after a numerously-signed petition had been presented, a long time elapsed before any reply was received at all, and when the reply was received it was of a most stereotyped and, he did not hesitate to say, unsatisfactory kind. He wished also to say a few words with regard to another subject that had been brought up

during the debate. The honourable member for Egmont and the honourable member for New Plymouth had referred to the state of the roads in their districts, and contended that they were not receiving the attention they merited. He thought he was not by any means exacting with regard to the demands he made on the Minister of Lands or upon the Minister for Public Works. He was generally quite content with what he was able to receive; but he had a grievance. There was no place in New Zealand where roads were more required than in the bush part of the Wairarapa. During the past session he was led to expect that there would be a considerable expenditure on roads in his district; but he found, on reference to the survey report, that the amount that was voted last year had not been by any means expended. Turning to page 11 of the report, he found that the sum of £20,875 was borrowed under "The Loans to Local Bodies Act, 1891," for East Puketoi. That was a locality where a number of special-settlement associations had taken up blocks of land, and where the process of settlement was now going on, and where roads were very much required. This amount was borrowed in two sums. The first application was for East Puketoi Block. The amount borrowed was £11,600, and only £3,280 appeared to have been spent. He was not aware that any liabilities had been incurred in connection with the roads in that neighbourhood, inasmuch as it was only within the last twelve or fifteen months that the roads had really been begun. He was merely relying on the survey report. It appeared from this report that out of £11,600 borrowed on that East Puketoi Block only £3,280 had been expended. Then, there was an application for £3,275, of which only £1,585 was expended; making a total expenditure of £4,815 from a vote of £20,875. He was very glad to hear the Minister say there had not been any time to expend the money. All he hoped was that, seeing there was a balance of £16,000 yet remaining to be expended, no time would now be lost in spending the rest of the money. The demand made by the settlers in the neighbourhood was very great indeed, as the roads at the present time were of such a character that it was utterly impossible for the settlers to travel over them, and they were unable to get stock on to the land. Others, again, were isolated in the midst of mud and mire, unable to get out, and unable to communicate with any of the markets, or to reach a railway. He thought it was the duty of the Government, seeing there was such a large amount of money unexpended, and seeing that the requirements of the settlers were so great, to lose no time in having the money expended. There was a considerable number of men in want of employment, and he thought if the money were expended as rapidly as possible on the roads it would be not only a benefit to the settlers of the locality, but also a great relief to the working-classes.

Mr. BUCHANAN said it was not very often that he took up the time of the House, and as

It was now about ten minutes from the time for the adjournment he did not think any great interest would be seriously endangered if he occupied that very short time. He wished to say a few words with regard to the case of the unfortunate gentleman, Mr. Riddle, who had been the subject of the discussion that afternoon. It was not always that he (Mr. Buchanan) agreed with what fell from the honourable member for Masterton, but with regard to what he had said concerning Mr. Riddle he could cordially agree—that Mr. Riddle stood that day a very much wronged man. His petition came before the House two sessions ago, but the iniquitous net had been drawn round the man only too successfully, as was shown by the decision of the Magistrate, and the report of the Committee before whom his petition came. He had no doubt that the Committee did its best with the evidence before it, but it was a matter for great regret that this gentleman, who had suffered, he was sure, to the extent of the money he mentioned in his petition, and also in body and mind in various ways, should be allowed to suffer from grievances unredressed. He would like, however, to say this: that, in his opinion, the honourable member for Masterton should stand severely censured for accusing the police of taking a part with others in a conspiracy against this gentleman. He could not think the honourable member could for a moment believe what he had stated to the House when he brought such a grave accusation as this against men in such responsible positions. He hoped the honourable gentleman would, on the earliest occasion, assure the House that they had misunderstood him when he made this accusation against these policemen. He could not think for a moment that men who had been in important charges in that district for many years could be guilty of such conduct.

Mr. FISH had just a word or two to say. He thought it would be apparent to the House that the mistake which the honourable member for Inangahua, and also his (Mr. Fish's) colleague (Mr. W. Hutchison), had fallen into was in jumping to the conclusion that these votes that the City Council of Dunedin had placed on the roll were bogus votes. Now, he said distinctly that neither of these honourable gentlemen had the slightest right to cast the slur they had cast upon a respectable body of citizens who were representative of the local interests in that town. If the City Council of Dunedin had done anything wrong,—which he utterly refused to believe until he knew it for a fact,—no one would more regret it than himself, and he would take the earliest opportunity of communicating with the Clerk of the City Council of Dunedin with the view of getting from him the full particulars of the matter; and he would also deem it to be his duty to make the House in some way or another acquainted with the results of the investigation which he was sure would take place. He was quite certain that it would be found that all the votes admitted by the Coun-

Mr. Buchanan

cil were votes which could not possibly be kept off. As he had said in his opening remarks, there were at least one hundred and sixty or one hundred and seventy votes placed on the roll just previously to the last mayoral election in Dunedin by the four candidates. There were a number of these men living in houses, and who had got allotments for six or twelve months, and in a time of excitement it was not unusual for votes of this kind to be placed on the roll. An agreement was made, and a number of these men were placed on the roll. There was no question about that. He believed, at the same time, that, in all cases when they were so near to an election, these facilities for placing names on the roll should not be given; and he had intended, at the request of the Council, had the consolidated Municipal Corporations Bill been brought before the House this session, to move for the insertion of a clause which would have prevented such things as took place at the last mayoral election taking place again. With regard to the insertion on the roll of names at the present time, it was a proper thing to do, because a considerable number of names of ratepayers had been left off the roll, either through neglect or inadvertence, or in other ways, and this was the last chance which the ratepayers or those entitled to vote had for getting on the roll. This matter was really disposed of in a hurry, and the officer responsible had not the time to look over the names; but he stated the different cases, and thought it quite possible that some might have been placed on the roll who were not what the paper represented them to be. Whether that was so he did not know, but he would take care to ascertain authoritatively from the City Council, through its Town Clerk, whether these were the facts or not. He was perfectly certain, for he knew the members of the Council quite well, that, when they passed these claims by a considerable majority, as they did, only two members voting against it, nothing of the kind alleged that afternoon had been done. If the law allowed anything to be done which could be done by a little stretch of the conscience, they could hardly blame those people for that little stretching of the conscience when they recognised the extremes to which the temperance party would go. He spoke confidently when he said it was a common practice of temperance people of extreme views, whenever they had the opportunity, to endeavour to place their wives on the roll in order that they might vote for the furtherance of their particular views; and there were but very few who did not know this to be a fact. Well, the other party noticed it, and perhaps some such things as this did occur. He did not say that in either case it was wrong, but it was a principle and a practice which he thought the law should stop as far as possible. But at the same time they could not be surprised that one side would try to checkmate the other. That was the long and short of it. He would not detain the House longer. He again expressed regret that the honourable member for Inangahua brought

the matter up in the way he did, and he was perfectly certain he would not have done so if he had not been a fanatic in the cause of temperance. The honourable gentleman also mentioned in the course of his speech the case of the accountant of a brewer who did not reside in the town. There was no crime in that. A person might have a vote for leasehold or for freehold property, although he might not reside in the town in which it was situated.

Mr. TANNER said that was a pity.

Mr. FISH said that was the law, at all events.

Mr. TANNER said they would soon alter it, then.

Mr. FISH said his honourable friend was not going to rule the country, nor were his friends either. He did not know how the country would get on if the honourable gentleman and his friends got their way. He thought the time was fast coming when they would be extinct factors so far as political matters were concerned. It would be a very long time, at any rate, before this change took place that his honourable friend wanted to see brought about. There was one thing further he would like to mention, and that was that, when he spoke of bogus votes and recalled to the mind of the honourable member for Inangahua the fact of a bogus vote having been manufactured by him for Sir Julius Vogel, he had not denied it. Therefore he was sure that honourable gentleman knew from practical experience what a bogus vote meant.

Amendment negatived.

SUPPLY.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Mr. FISHER moved, That the complete correspondence relating to the retirement of Mr. Fisher from the Atkinson Ministry be printed.

Mr. SEDDON regretted that, with a view of facilitating business, he could not accept the amendment. At the same time the Government would have no objection whatever to the honourable gentleman's request being granted on some other occasion.

Mr. FERGUS did not think that the Premier would obstruct the business of the House by accepting the amendment. He wished to be perfectly fair to a late enemy of his—he alluded to the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher). In a recent number of *Herald* there appeared a portion of the correspondence relating to the honourable gentleman's retirement from the Atkinson Ministry, and, as he (Mr. Fergus) was one of those who took an active part in the retirement of that honourable gentleman, he thought it would be absolutely fair and just to him that the whole of the correspondence should be published, and that it should not be dragged out in the House piecemeal in order to blacken the honourable gentleman's character any more than it had been blackened in the past. He did not think it was right to drag up these things year after year; he did not think it was fair

or honourable; and he thought the Premier might accept the amendment. He said so feeling perfectly certain that the memory of the late Premier (Sir H. Atkinson) would suffer no wrong from so doing, and that he would have been the very last to object to the whole being made public property.

Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable gentleman must have misunderstood him. He had said that he would ask the House to negative the amendment, so that they might get into Supply; but that he would take an early opportunity of asking that the correspondence referred to be laid on the table, and be printed.

The House divided on the question, "That the words, 'this House do now go into Committee of Supply,' stand part of the question."

AYES, 25.

Blake	Lawry	Stout
Carroll	Mackintosh	Taipua
Duncan	McGowan	Tanner
Fraser	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Ward.
Hogg	Mills, C. H.	
Houston	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kapa	Saunders	Buick
Kelly, J.	Seddon	Hutchison, W.

NOES, 27.

Allen	Harkness	Russell
Bruce	Hutchison, G.	Shera
Buchanan	Lake	Smith, E. M.
Buckland	Mackenzie, T.	Swan
Carnoross	McGuire	Wilson
Duthie	Moore	Wright.
Earnshaw	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fergus	Rhodes	Fisher
Hall	Rolleston	McLean.
Hamlin		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Kelly, W.	Mitchelson
Pinkerton	Mills, J.
Smith, W. C.	Valentine.

Majority against, 2.

Motion negatived, and amendment agreed to.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the House do now go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. DUTHIE understood that this was the opportunity which honourable members had of bringing under the notice of the House any grievance they had to complain of. The matter he wished to complain of was in regard to the question he had on the Order Paper that afternoon. It was a very courteous and civil question, and he thought he was entitled to a courteous and civil answer. His question, however, did not meet with that response. The question was, "What number of small farmers or others are expected to arrive per s.s. 'Ruahine' under the reduced fares arranged by the Agent-General, and what steps are being taken to settle these people on suitable land?" He submitted that was a proper question, and he trusted he put it in courteous and civil terms. He gathered from the Press

Association telegrams a somewhat different aspect of the matter, and to that he would refer presently; but, so far as the grievance was concerned, the Minister of Lands had twitted him with being one of those men who were very fond of putting questions on the strength of newspaper paragraphs. The Minister's whole manner and words were of a rude, uncivil character. That was the manner which specially characterized that Minister, not only to himself, but also that afternoon to the honourable member for Egmont, to whom he was still more uncivil and positively insulting.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE submitted this was not proper language to use—to say that his manner had been insulting to a member of the House.

The ACTING-SPEAKER thought the word should be withdrawn by the honourable member, and he would ask him to withdraw it, as it was not parliamentary.

Mr. DUTHIE said he always supported the Chair, and he would withdraw the word "insulting." He had not another word ready at the time to convey his meaning. But the reply of the Minister was not one which any honourable member had a right to expect—he referred to the reply given to the honourable member for Egmont. Now, having stated that, he wished to draw the attention of the House to what had taken place in respect to these immigrants. He saw by the Press Association telegrams that these immigrants were not the class of people they had been led to expect. They were not small farmers ready to go on the lands of the country, but consisted of London clerks, *et cetera*; none of them had any experience of country work; and these men were to be sent to Taranaki and there sent adrift. The Government had lent their assistance to the bringing of these people out, inasmuch as they were brought out under the reduced fares arranged with the shipping company, and they were met by Mr. March, a Government officer—that fact lending colour to the view that they were introduced under the auspices of the Government. It was a positive cruelty to bring men of that sort into the country. Our education system had produced a very large number of people who sought indoor employment, and the country was crowded with clerical people—often men too weak in physical strength to go to work in the country; there was therefore more misery at the present time in the towns of New Zealand among men of that class than in any other grade of society. That the Government should lend its assistance to bring them out was not in the interests of the country, and was a great wrong and hardship to these young men. He happened to know a little of Mr. Courtney. He was at one time a settler of Taranaki, but had become what was known in London as a "runner," who went about trying to induce people to take passages, receiving fees from the shipping companies, and also something from the Government, to remunerate him for his services. A man of that kind ought not to be recognised or assisted in his work by the Government of the country. One read in romances of the wonderful suc-

cess of people who went upon land; but those who lived in the colony knew the hardships of bush-settlement, and how extremely rare it was that any one succeeded who had been brought up to indoor town life. He need not explain this matter more fully than he had done; but he thought it was a subject deserving the attention of the House, and that the Government should see there was no repetition. He was sure they would all welcome the right class of men, but it was a cruelty to bring men out to the colony who were unfitted for the laborious class of work involved in the settlement of bush-land.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said it was very much against his will that he got up on this occasion to address the House; but he was really compelled to do so by the words that had fallen from the last speaker. Of all the inconsistent men in the colony and in that House the honourable member for Wellington City was that man. Whenever anything referring to Taranaki was brought up, he was always upon his feet denouncing Taranaki and the Government. Now it was a question of these few men landing in the colony—paying their own passages—men of means coming to this country—and that seemed to be a great grievance with the honourable member. He thought that in a colony like this, with a population of only six hundred thousand, they had plenty of room for all respectable, honest, hard-working people who might care to come here. The other day the honourable member for Wellington City was raving—

Mr. T. MACKENZIE wished to draw the Speaker's attention to the words used by the honourable member for New Plymouth. He did not think it was parliamentary to say that the honourable member for Wellington City was raving. The point of order he raised was this: that the honourable member characterized the remarks of the honourable member for Wellington as ravings, and he (Mr. Mackenzie) asked if that was parliamentary language.

The ACTING-SPEAKER thought it was. He did not see anything unparliamentary in it.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said that, of all the members who might object to any language of his, the honourable member for Clutha ought to be the last. That honourable gentleman ought to be the last to try to put any other member in that House right. At any rate, he might say that he was very glad to see these people arriving in the colony; and he took this opportunity of saying that, if Mr. Courtney had gone Home to England and had been the means of introducing into this colony some six hundred or eight hundred people at various times, he would give him this credit: that when he got them into the colony he left no stone unturned to try to get them employment, and he (Mr. Smith) knew that he had gone to a large amount of expense and trouble in finding employment for every batch he had brought out. He was not one of those who had subscribed to enable Mr. Courtney to pay visits to England. From information he had received, these people had paid their own

Mr. Duthie

passages, and they were, nearly all of them, people of means. Some of them had had employment secured for them before they left London, and others had come to their friends. And yet they found the honourable member for Wellington City getting up and denouncing Mr. Courtney and his method of introducing people into this colony! He trusted the honourable gentleman would leave Mr. Courtney and the Taranaki District alone. He should not talk as he did about it, because Taranaki was the place where that honourable gentleman had made his mark, and it was owing to Taranaki that he held the position he now occupied. He started business there, and from his success there was to be traced his success in Wellington. But if they talked about that district the honourable gentleman would say that what they said about the lands, the roads, and the people of Taranaki was all wrong. He hoped that in future the honourable gentleman would leave them alone, and they would take care of themselves. He remembered a time when Wellington sent its unemployed up to Taranaki. The people there looked after them, and they had now got freehold farms and were doing well. That district was willing to take all the unemployed of the colony if the Government would make good roads for them.

Mr. J. McKENZIE expected he would have to accept the good advice and admonition he got from the honourable member for Wellington City in good part. The honourable gentleman had chosen to refer to him in language which was very seldom used to members in that House. This was not the first time that the honourable gentleman had referred to him in the same manner, not only in that House, but outside the House. If he were admonished by an accomplished gentleman, by an accomplished scholar, or by a refined gentleman in that House, he would take it in good part; but when he was admonished by an ignorant, purse-proud merchant—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

The ACTING-SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must withdraw those words.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he would withdraw the words, and would say a wealthy commercial gentleman in Wellington. When he was admonished in that way he declined to accept that admonition. The honourable gentleman seemed to sit on thorns if he did not get everything his own way. He was told in plain language the facts of any matter he brought before the House, and if he did not get his way he immediately got up and spoke in the style he had adopted that evening, especially in connection with such matters as the Minister of Lands had to do with. He never lost an opportunity in that House or outside of it, or wherever he sat or stood, of saying a bad word for him (Mr. McKenzie). He could assure the honourable gentleman that it had not the slightest effect upon the Minister of Lands whatever the honourable gentleman's opinion might be of him in any shape or form. If the honourable gentleman had waited until he

saw what class of people they were who came out in this ship, he might have some reason for talking about them. He read a telegram from a newspaper, and came to the conclusion that, of course, that telegram must be right. He had told the honourable gentleman already that they had sent up an officer of a Government department to meet these people, and he thought that if the honourable gentleman had waited until that officer returned, having found out what class of people these were, he might have some reason to complain if they were not what was represented. He had no doubt Mr. Courtney, who brought these people out, had his arrangements made where and how to place them, and there could be no possible cruelty in bringing them out here. When the Government arranged to bring out people they were not supposed to be all farmers. He had no doubt Mr. Courtney could show the Agent-General that they had a certain amount of money, and he had no doubt he took care that these people had complied with the conditions laid down. They were not bringing out paupers, but people with money, and surely it was not necessary they should all go on the land. One or more of them might start a shop in Wellington and sell tinned tacks, and do a very good business. He knew a gentleman in this colony who made a great fortune by commencing to sell tinned tacks, and it was quite possible some of those people might do the same, and sell bars of iron, tinned tacks, nails, hammers, and so forth. They might become very wealthy citizens of New Zealand, and, in fact, some of them might have a seat in that House, and be admonishing the Minister of Lands. He thought that the honourable gentleman, with this great grievance of his, might, at any rate, wait until these people arrived. The honourable gentleman's reason for bringing this matter before the House was that he was not pleased with the answer he had received to a question of his that day. Well, he (Mr. McKenzie) was not there to give answers that might please honourable gentlemen. He had to give facts, and if those facts were not pleasing to honourable gentlemen he could not help it. He was sure the honourable member for Egmont had not been pleased with the answer he got, but no doubt that honourable gentleman would have been pleased if he had been told that roads would be made in all directions and that thousands of pounds would be expended in his district. But his duty as Minister was to look after the interest of the colony as a whole, and not merely to give replies that might be pleasing to members. He would advise the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) to leave the Minister of Lands alone so far as his personal appearance, and character, and everything else were concerned, for if he tried it again he might expect to be replied to in the same way.

Mr. ROLLESTON said if he were speaking for his side of the House he would say that he could not wish for anything better than that the Minister of Lands should give two or three more such answers as he had given that

day, and make such another speech as he had just delivered; but there was something else that the Opposition had to consider, and that was the honour and decency of the House, and the speech they had just listened to was a gross violation of both. He had been in the House for a long time and he had never before heard such a speech as that. He would be sorry to characterize it in words that would express his feelings. That afternoon, when the questions were being put, he was not attending very closely, and did not hear the form in which the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) put his question, but, even if he put that question as offensively as he could, he did not deserve to get such an offensive answer as he had received. He felt that if such a reply as that, and such a reply as had been given to the honourable member for Egmont, were given often, the good sense and feeling of the House would rebel against the Minister of Lands. He did not think the honourable gentleman had shown a proper sense of what was due to the House and what was due from a Minister of the Crown. He would not say more regarding that matter, but he might say that he had never heard the honourable member for Wellington City say or do anything in that House of which he need be ashamed. There was no member in the House with a more practical turn of mind, or who spoke with greater weight upon commercial subjects, and he ventured to say that in this particular case the views of the honourable gentleman were deserving of great consideration on the part of the Minister. He would say no more on that, for he did not think that any words were required from him, or from any one else, on the question. He, however, would like to say a word or two with regard to the introduction of immigrants under a system by which they were not directly subsidised, but a system which was promoted by the Government, and for which Ministers had made themselves responsible, to some extent, by the way in which the Agent-General had acted on their behalf. The Agent-General, acting on behalf of the Government, had written very carefully prepared communications to the shipping companies; and there was no doubt that it was at the instance of the Government that the shipping companies were now bringing out immigrants. He was bound to say that he thought the course that had been taken was likely to land the Government in very considerable difficulties. They were open to responsibilities which might turn out very disastrously, and cause a great deal of discontent. He hoped it would not be so; but he must say that he did not think that the precautions that were being taken, or any precautions that could be taken, would prevent a considerable amount of disappointment through bringing out people who might not be adapted for the course of life on which they would have to enter in the colony. He had read that afternoon the correspondence with the Agent-General; and he ventured to

he hope that he would not receive answer as the honourable member for

Rolleston

Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) had got when he asked the Government to consider well before they allowed people to come out, and adopted a responsibility which he was sure would cause them a great deal of trouble, and result in a great deal of suffering to those concerned.

Sir R. STOUT said it was one o'clock the previous night before the House got into Committee of Supply, and now this afternoon there had been two motions for adjournment and two motions intercepting Supply, and going into Supply was again being delayed. He could only say that he did not think the Government were to blame for this question being brought on, and he did not think it became the dignity of the House that such a question should be discussed there. If he were an immigrant just landing in the country, and heard that Parliament was discussing the question of a few people landing on the shores of the colony, he would think, what a strange country he had got into! He did not think it should be forgotten that it was the honourable member for Wellington City who was the aggressor, and not the Minister of Lands. If honourable gentlemen made attacks on other honourable gentlemen they must expect that comments would be made on their remarks. He submitted that this was all a waste of time, this talking about a handful of immigrants who had landed in the colony. He asked that the House should now go into Supply, and that they should discuss the estimates before it was past midnight. There was only one question that he would like to ask the Premier to answer, and that was, when the Liquor Control Bill would be circulated. He put that question with all earnestness, because he had received telegrams from all over the colony wanting him to send information as to the contents of the Bill, and he had, unfortunately, been obliged to reply that he did not know them himself. He hoped the Premier, when replying, would state when they might expect a print of the Bill.

Dr. NEWMAN did not wish to take up the time of the House for any lengthened period, but the motion for going into Committee of Supply was the only chance honourable members had of bringing forward grievances. He was almost forced into this position, for there was a question which he wished to put, and he might not have another opportunity of doing so. He wanted to ask the Colonial Treasurer a question with regard to the accounts for the quarter ending on the 30th June. He found in the accounts of Treasury bills that the Treasury bills had leaped from £694,000 on the 31st March to £1,204,000 on the 30th June. That seemed to him such an extraordinary state of affairs that he felt really justified in taking up the time of the House in asking for an explanation of it. Last year the Government brought in a Public Revenues Act, which increased the Treasury bills by £100,000, and gave them power to float £450,000 further, in order to their being issued as a guarantee for the interest to go Home on the millions domiciled in the Bank of England. A division was taken on the subject, and the members of the

Opposition voted against it, but they were defeated. Then, in Committee on the Bill, he moved, as an amendment to clause 2, that the application of this £450,000 should be strictly limited to the statement made by the late Mr. Ballance; but he was defeated on that motion, and the result was that now, within three months of the end of the financial year, they had these Treasury bills leaping from £694,000 to £1,204,000. When the Stout-Vogel Government went out of office with a large deficit, the amount of Treasury bills floating was £1,300,000, and now it was £1,204,000. In other words, the amount was now nearly as great as it was when that large deficit existed. There was no doubt that the floating of Treasury bills to such a large extent was a great mistake. Indeed, some of the best financiers of the day wrote of it as a financial leprosy. They had this fact before them: that, after the Minister had told the people that the Government had a surplus of half a million, they still found that the Treasurer had issued new bills to the extent of £510,000 within three months, without paying off any of the old ones. That showed that the Ministry were acting in a very unsatisfactory manner. He was sorry that the Ministry last year received power to increase this floating debt as they had done. No doubt the Premier would give him the usual answer that it was all right; but there was the fact that these bills had increased to this amount, and there was the added fact that the Treasurer had increased the amount of money required for the payment of these Treasury bills from £40,000 to £50,000. It was time attention was called to this matter.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON wished to say a word in relation to what occurred when the House was in Committee of Supply that morning. When the item of £1,170 for the dredge at New Plymouth was under consideration the Premier gave an explanation of that item; and he (Mr. Hutchison) was understood to have hesitated to accept the statement of the Premier. In that, there was no doubt, he was wrong. He ought to have accepted the statement of any honourable member. He desired, therefore, voluntarily to express his regret, and hoped the honourable gentleman would accept this explanation. The incident occurred under circumstances that were certainly not conducive to preserving the amenities of debate, seeing that it occurred in the course of a protracted sitting, about four o'clock in the morning.

Sir J. HALL thought that some reply should be given to the remarks of the honourable member for the Hutt.

Mr. SEDDON said he would refer to those remarks when replying.

Sir J. HALL said it appeared that the honourable gentleman was not only Prime Minister, and Minister for Public Works, and Minister of Mines, and Minister of Defence, and Minister in Charge of Native Affairs, but he was also Colonial Treasurer, if it was from the honourable gentleman that they were to receive an answer to the purely Treasury ques-

tion put by the honourable member for the Hutt.

Mr. SEDDON.—You do not want to prolong the debate, do you?

Sir J. HALL.—No; but honourable members wanted a good deal of information about the Treasury. They were kept in the dark about the public accounts to a very great extent. It had struck not only the honourable member for the Hutt, but himself, as odd, on reading the public accounts, that, while at the end of the March quarter £694,000 of Treasury bills were outstanding, £510,000 of Treasury bills were issued during the June quarter in anticipation of revenue. That had been done without any explanation having been given to the House. That was a proceeding which must excite remark on the part of every person familiar with the finances of the colony. He hoped they would have a satisfactory explanation from the Colonial Treasurer.

Mr. SEDDON said, first of all he might be permitted to say, in offering to reply to the question raised by the honourable member for the Hutt as to a Treasury matter, that he would not have attempted to reply to him had it not been that this question was raised by a question asked in the House last week, and, in the absence of the Colonial Treasurer, it fell to his lot to reply to that question. Hence he was in a position to reply to the honourable gentleman now. Taking the revenue at four millions—and by law they were entitled to take a quarter of that—that would be a million. The honourable gentleman had only shown that there had been taken £500,000. Now, as regarded the total amount, as stated, £1,450,000, £1,204,000 was the total amount raised in anticipation, leaving £246,000 still to the good. The question was raised that they could only issue that as against the revenue.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I did not raise that question.

Mr. SEDDON said, at any rate, the question was raised, and they were told that they had exceeded the law in doing as they had done. He pointed out the other day that, so far as power was given by law, they were still entitled to raise £246,000 more. He was told that he was entirely wrong in making that statement, but, as he had no desire to prolong debate, he let the matter go, and determined to take the earliest opportunity of dealing with the point. They had, as against revenue, £246,000—£152,000 and £94,000 guaranteed debentures, making, of course, the amount still available £246,000. He might be permitted to say that a complete reply was given to everything that had been raised that evening during the debate on the Financial Statement. He was prohibited by the rules of the House from referring to a previous debate, and it appeared to him to be a waste of time to raise questions in a debate like the present on matters which had been fully replied to by the Colonial Treasurer.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member might say "No." The honourable member was

entitled to his opinion, and he (Mr. Seddon) was entitled to his. The points raised were fully met in the Treasurer's reply in the financial debate. He was very glad to have had the explanation given that evening by the honourable member for Waitotara. He felt very much hurt last night at the reception of his explanation as to how it was that the expenditure in connection with the New Plymouth Harbour still exceeded the amount that was voted, and his explanation as regarded the repairs to the vessels, the extra cost of detention, and the insurance, and things of that kind, which when he made the statement to the House could not have been foreseen. As that expenditure was incurred under the terms of the agreement, the Government had taken the earliest opportunity of carrying out the promise given to the House. He did feel somewhat pained when that statement was questioned. He was very much pleased that the honourable member for Waitotara had made the explanation which he had done, and he could assure the honourable gentleman, on his (Mr. Seddon's) part, nothing would be wanting to maintain that good feeling which should ever exist between honourable members on both sides of the House. Now he came to—what should he call it?—the unpleasant matter which had arisen that evening. The House would agree with him that when a member was called to order by the Speaker, and asked to withdraw expressions he had used, those expressions must have been irritating, and, not only irritating, but against the good order and good conduct of business in the House. The member who had so transgressed must be held to have been in the wrong. And there was no doubt the words were withdrawn, but the member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) then said that he was at a loss to find other words to take their place. That was not the kind of withdrawal which would tend to appease, or to promote good feeling.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is not what he said.

Mr. SEDDON said that was what the honourable member did say. Had the words been withdrawn, as they should have been, good feeling would have been restored, and in all probability the Hon. the Minister of Lands would not have spoken in so heated a manner as he had shown. But he asked honourable members to recollect this: that that was not the first case. When honourable members persisted day after day in making attacks on the administration of any particular Minister, or in not accepting assurances given or explanations made by Ministers, though the irritation for the time being might be allayed, still, when further irritation occurred like that which had taken place that evening, he was sure the House would agree that, under the circumstances, his honourable colleague (Mr. McKenzie) was not to blame.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Two wrongs do not make a right.

Mr. SEDDON.—Well, that was a matter of opinion. He must say that he was not alto-

Mr. Seddon

gether nervous—he was not easily irritated—but he must confess that during the last few days, and especially last night, when four or five honourable members opposite were ejaculating, and interrupting, and accusing Ministers of stonewalling, and preventing them from going on with Supply, whilst the Minister was endeavouring to meet what had been said before—he must confess that it was irritating. He would ask the leader of the Opposition, who had taken exception to the remarks of the Minister of Lands, to exercise a control over his supporters, which would help him (Mr. Seddon) in the conduct of the business of the House, and would assist in the observance of decorum in the debates, and in maintaining what was due to the position which they occupied as the representatives of the people of New Zealand. Now, coming to the question of the immigrants who had arrived by the "Ruahine," let them apply the position of these new arrivals to the position of honourable members, and of very many in the colony. Were they not, many of them, in a similar position to that of these new arrivals? Were not many colonists simply young and strong when they landed here? And, in the case of the new arrivals, these men had a little capital. He undertook to say that these men arriving in New Zealand now were in a better position than probably three-fourths of the members sitting in that House. He was informed by one who knew that these new arrivals had brought with them about £9,000, and, including women and children, there were some seventy all told. Would what had occurred that evening tend to promote the coming to New Zealand of a very desirable class of immigrants? The Government, in accordance with the general wishes of honourable members on both sides of the House, had made arrangements, and when those arrangements were stated to the House they were cheered. They had never heard a single word of objection to the arrangements made; and it was casting a reflection on the Agent-General, a gentleman who was really doing good work for the colony, that, when he had approved of these immigrants, remarks such as those made by the honourable gentleman opposite should be made—it was casting a reflection upon him. It might be quite true, as was stated in the telegram which had been quoted—it might be true that these were young men, and that they had been in merchants' offices in London; but that did not prove that some of them were not the sons of farmers. He undertook to say that in our large towns a good many sons of farmers would be found who had gone into commercial pursuits. Even if these men had been brought up to a commercial life at home, still they knew that, when a man was young and strong and willing, and when he came to a country like this, where there was scope for his energies, he soon suited himself to the circumstances; and he undertook to say that these men were men of the right sort, and that they were encouraged. It was not that they were extending

subject should have been raised and discussed in the House that night; and no doubt much had been made of it. The first reports of the arrival of these men in the colony would go Home with the next monthly mail, and they would go Home together with reports of what had occurred in the House that night. What had occurred was casting a damper on all that had been done, and it made it very hard indeed for the Agent-General to meet what were the general wishes of the people; and he thought the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) would have been wise had he refrained from raising that question at all, and that honourable gentleman was to blame for what had occurred. Then, he was asked by the honourable member for Inangahua to give a reply to a very important question, and that was, when the Alcoholic Liquors Control Bill would be brought down. He did not think he would be taking the House by surprise when he told them that he had found it more difficult to frame a Bill which would please everybody than he at first anticipated. In all probability he might be disappointed later on, but, at all events, the Government were doing their best, and he hoped, if all went well, to have the Bill circulated and in the hands of honourable members the following day. He hoped the honourable member for Inangahua would be satisfied with that reply.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS II.—COLONIAL SECRETARY.

Minister's salary, £400.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked the Premier when he proposed to fill up the Native Affairs portfolio.

Mr. SEDDON said that practically the office was filled already, so far as the work was concerned. In the Financial Statement two sessions ago they mentioned that they proposed to abolish altogether the portfolio of Minister of Native Affairs. That statement was made, and was accepted by the House. They found afterwards that certain legislation had created a necessity for the maintenance of the portfolio, and there was no chance, at all events this session, of doing away with it. He hoped ere long to make, in the usual course, a statement to the House about their intentions in this respect.

Captain RUSSELL could not at all agree with the idea, which was not a new one, that had been alluded to by the Premier, of abolishing the Native Office. They would not abolish the Native Office for a great many years yet, and they ought not to abolish it. It was a very large and a very important department; and, as they had fresh departments being created continually, and there were over forty thousand Natives in the colony at the present time, why should they not have a department to themselves, when there was a special portfolio for Labour and a portfolio for Mines? He thought the House should at once say that they declined to agree to the abolition of the Native Department.

Sir J. HALL said the answer of the honourable gentleman was most unsatisfactory. As the session was now getting on, the country had a right to know in whose hands the management of Native Affairs was to remain during the recess, and it was for the House to ascertain that fact before they parted. The office had now been going begging for more than a month, and, if there was any reason why it was not filled up, that reason ought to be stated to the House. In the absence of such information, he could not understand why the portfolio was not filled up. The House and the country were not being fairly treated. Two years ago the Government announced that they would abolish the Native Office. They abolished it, and they had since restored it. A large number of people throughout the country would echo his statement when he said that to leave the matter in its present state of doubt and uncertainty was a most unsatisfactory position.

Mr. SEDDON said the House had a right to know what was to be done in the matter before they adjourned. The House would know before the prorogation took place, and perhaps some considerable time before that event took place. The House would not be left in doubt as to what would occur during the recess. Very large savings had been effected through the changes which had been made, and these savings were shown in the estimates now before the Committee, and it was in the interest of economy that these changes were made.

Vote, £400, agreed to.

Vote, Clerk of Executive Council, £50, agreed to.

Vote, Colonial Secretary's Office, £1,495, agreed to.

Vote, Ministers' Secretaries, £600, agreed to.

Vote, Messengers and office-keepers, £4,134, agreed to.

Electoral Department, £11,600.

Dr. NEWMAN asked at what time the Minister expected this money to be expended. At what time would the general election take place?

Mr. WARD said the money would be expended during the vacation. It was not necessary to state the time. It was not very far distant.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said that in connection with this vote he found that £1,000 was put down to defray the expenses of printing rolls, advertising, elections, and contingencies. He thought the Premier had promised, when the matter was previously brought under his notice, to inform the House whether or not it was true he had paid an extra rate for the printing of the rolls to newspapers of the right colour, which were paying less wages than the Opposition papers paid.

Mr. WARD said the printing of the rolls throughout the colony had been carried out in the usual way. Tenders had been openly invited, and, wherever they came within the specifications, tenders were accepted without reference to whether the tenderers were of the right colour or the wrong colour. As a matter

of fact, many of the tenders that were accepted he knew himself were those sent in by persons who were not supporters of the Government.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said that, as a matter of fact, when tenders were called for the printing of the rolls in the south of Otago, tenders went in in the ordinary way. He knew that in one case a higher tender was accepted than the lowest one sent in, and the plea offered was that the office which was getting the contract was paying a right and proper rate of wages to its employes,—when, as a matter of fact, it was paying them half the current rates.

Mr. BUCKLAND said it was published in the Auckland newspapers that none of the tenders from Auckland would be received, as the Government had determined to have the whole of the rolls printed in the Government Printing Office at Wellington, because the prices quoted by the tenderers were so low that they could not pay their men a sufficient rate of wages. He wished to know whether there was any truth in that, or whether the Government had formed that opinion and afterwards altered it.

Mr. WARD said the Auckland rolls were being printed in Auckland. There was no foundation whatever for the report to which the honourable gentleman had referred.

Mr. RHODES asked if the Government had appointed a Registrar at Pareora; and, if not, would they appoint some resident of the place? He believed that some resident of Timaru had been appointed.

Mr. SEDDON said that, as a matter of convenience, if the gentleman who was attending to the registration of the electors was not living within a convenient distance so that he could do justice to the rolls and to the electors, the Government would be glad to know from the local bodies of a gentleman who could act in a way that would suit the public convenience.

Captain RUSSELL drew the attention of the Minister to the utterly insignificant remuneration set down for the payment of Registrars. It was a notorious fact that every electoral roll of the colony was in a disgraceful condition, and this was owing to the inadequacy of the payment made to the Registrars. Now that it was likely that within the next two months three thousand people would be added to each of the rolls, it was more than ever necessary to provide some proper remuneration for the officers who attended to this work. At present it was forced upon unwilling Government officers, who were compelled to do it in addition to their ordinary work. Some arrangement should be made whereby the rolls could be properly purged, and these people be properly remunerated.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that, knowing the circumstances in which the Registrars did their work, he was surprised that they did it so satisfactorily and that they kept the rolls in such a good condition. He hoped the Government would look into this question.

Mr. WARD said the question would be looked into. He might inform the honourable gentleman who had raised the point that, in addition

Mr. Ward

to the amount now on the estimates for these Registrars, they were allowed full pay for extra clerical assistance. The amount they were now being paid was the same as it had been for many years. He would have it looked into, to see if it were sufficient. With regard to the probable increase of the rolls that had been alluded to, it would be provided for on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the condition of the rolls was no fault of the Registrars of the districts, who could not be supposed to discover the position of electors in respect to an imaginary boundary-line. The whole system of blundering was owing to those officers not being sufficiently paid.

Mr. ALLEN thought the system of appointing police officers as Registrars was unsatisfactory, and should be done away with.

Mr. O'CONOR would point out that the real work of keeping the rolls in a proper condition should be done by the electors themselves; it was entirely in their own hands; and he, for one, would object to having any officer working on the rolls without being very much checked by the public. But local Postmasters would be very useful if consulted in regard to purging the rolls.

Mr. FERGUS said the present method of registration in the large cities was most absurd, as it was impossible for the Registrars to know the numbers of people in cities like Wellington and Dunedin. It was, he thought, a great pity they had not adopted some such system as had been proposed by the honourable member for Inangahua some years ago.

Vote, £11,600, agreed to.

Vote, Audit Office, £5,805, agreed to.

Vote, Registrar-General's Department, £5,640, agreed to.

Agent-General's Department, £4,250.

Sir J. HALL asked, with reference to the omission of the item for Consulting Engineer, what provision had been made for the examination of stores.

Mr. WARD replied that it was provided for by the Railway Department.

Mr. FERGUS said they had always done that; but could the honourable gentleman give them any data as to the amount now paid by the Railway Department to those they had to employ to pass material?

Mr. WARD said it would be necessary to ascertain that from the Commissioners.

Captain RUSSELL asked under whose advice the Consulting Engineer had been done away with. So far as his memory served him, a very large amount of commission would have to be paid for the work which would be otherwise done by the Consulting Engineer. He would like to know what was the reason for abolishing the office.

Mr. SEDDON said the late Consulting Engineer, Mr. Blackett, had resigned. Prior to that the Railway Commissioners had been paying half that gentleman's salary. While Mr. Blackett was Consulting Engineer there were under him R. Wilson and Company, who did the inspection under the Engineer. He be-

hieved an arrangement was made under which their services were to be continued. The Commissioners had made the appointment, and the Government reserved to themselves the right of taking over the material on its arrival in the colony, as in the case of an ordinary importer. There was a saving under this arrangement.

Mr. FERGUS wished for more information about the matter. There was in the hands of the Minister for Public Works a memorandum from the Commissioners pointing out the inadvisability of doing away with the Consulting Engineer. The question of the death of Mr. Blackett had nothing whatever to do with the matter. With regard to what the Minister said as to the arrangement being similar to those of an ordinary importer, he would point out that no importer would send materials out to the colony on similar lines. The material imported by the Government was not like ordinary merchandise, which, if delivery were not taken, could be disposed of in the local market. He took leave to doubt the information supplied by the Premier, and would like him to turn up the memorandum submitted to the House a year or two ago by the Commissioners, strongly objecting to the removal of the Consulting Engineer, and pointing out that in times prior to that appointment being made inferior material was imported to a considerable extent.

Mr. SEDDON said the Assistant Consulting Engineer was Mr. Carruthers, and the honourable gentleman knew him.

Mr. FERGUS said the honourable gentleman had abolished the salary for Consulting Engineer and he presumed, therefore, the honourable gentleman meant to say that he was paid by commission.

Mr. SEDDON said the Railway Commissioners paid him £500 a year.

Mr. BUCHANAN would ask the Committee to realise that there was another than a money question involved in this, and that was the safety of the public. They had known railway material to be imported the defects of which had not been discovered until human life had been sacrificed. Why should the honourable gentleman refuse to take the Committee into his confidence and state at once what the position was since the alteration was made?

Mr. SEDDON thought that he had made the matter as plain as any man could do. The Railway Commissioners had appointed Mr. Carruthers, and if the Government wanted his services they could be obtained on the same footing as before. The inspection was done by the same Inspectors who were working when Mr. Blackett was Consulting Engineer.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked where the commission appeared in the estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said the heading "Rolling-stock" included everything.

Mr. FERGUS said the commission was debited to each particular work; there was no commission shown in the estimates. The commission was charged on the cost of the material. The cost of the Consulting Engineer's department was £920, as nearly as possible. Now, they found that Mr. Carruthers

was under an agreement to the Railway Commissioners to do their inspecting for £500, and the Government were paying a commission over and above that for the inspection of material brought out by them. Instead of any saving having been effected it would be found that really there had been very considerable additional expenditure.

Mr. HOGG said that if defective material had been introduced, and if there was a danger to life and limb from the introduction of extremely defective material, and it was necessary to spend nearly £1,000 a year for the Consulting Engineer, it was high time the Government considered the expediency of getting as little railway material as possible from other countries, and, instead of that, getting it manufactured in the colony, so as to give employment, and to insure their having material on which they could depend. He considered that, as borrowing had been stopped, and as they were importing nothing like the same amount of material which they imported some years back, there was very little need for a Consulting Engineer, or an Assistant Consulting Engineer. Such precautions should not be necessary, and he thought there ought to be an end to extravagance of this kind. He did not believe in the system of payment by commission. It led to this: that the more extravagance was shown in the purchase of material the more commission these officers received. It was a radically bad system altogether. He thought the services of this Consulting Engineer could be dispensed with, and that the Government should give a little more attention to the fostering of the industries of the colony.

Mr. SEDDON said there had been a saving effected both by the Railway Commissioners and by the Government. The £500 to Mr. Carruthers was against the £920 previously paid. The same commission was paid now as was paid formerly. They were not paying any more commission than before.

Mr. FISH said the cost of commission ought to be separately stated on the estimates.

Mr. SEDDON said, if the honourable gentleman would ask for a return of the cost of inspection for the year, he would be very glad to give it him.

Mr. FISH said that honourable members ought not to be compelled to ask for returns at all, but they ought to have the amount of commission on the estimates. The next item was £1,300 for rent and contingencies, including the expense of the Information Bureau. He would like to know what the Bureau was, and what proportion of the £1,300 was spent on it.

Mr. WARD said the Information Bureau was established by the Agent-General for the purpose of getting information in a convenient form for the Press and the public. That department had worked very satisfactorily indeed. The amount spent upon the Bureau, out of the vote of £1,300 for rent and contingencies, was £300.

Mr. FISH asked what was the amount for rent.

Mr. WARD replied £300.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he had had the pleasure last year of inspecting what the Agent-General was doing to represent the increased expenditure on the estimates, and it gave him great pleasure to testify to the success of that gentleman's efforts to make this Bureau of use to all New-Zealanders and other colonists visiting London, as well as to intending emigrants for New Zealand. If every other item on the estimates was so well justified as this one the Government could well be complimented on their expenditure.

Vote, £4,250, agreed to.

Printing and Stationery Department, £24,428.

Dr. NEWMAN drew attention to the item of £13,200 for parchment and stationery. There were firms that were desirous of tendering for this, and he thought they should have the opportunity of doing so, instead of ordering the supplies from England.

Mr. WARD said the Government felt it was not desirable to confine such large orders to a single firm, and what the honourable gentleman wanted had already been done.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked for an explanation as to the increase in the items for compositors and apprentices.

Mr. WARD said there had been a large influx of business, and it had been found necessary to increase the staff. On account of the increased business the staff had been employed continuously, and there was a consequent increase in the expenditure.

Sir R. STOUT thought a large saving might be effected in the expenditure of this department. At present there was a great loss to the colony. Although there was a credit shown of £14,000, the total vote was £24,428, and that represented the amount of the expenditure. A large amount could be saved in the printing of papers. Take the Mines Report: had it been one-tenth the size it would have been equally good. He thought large sums could be saved if they were more economical.

Mr. WARD would say, in reply to the honourable member for Inangahua, that of the sum shown as "credits" a large proportion was actually paid in cash in connection with work done at the Printing Office for other departments. The Government Insurance, Railway, and Public Trust Departments paid cash for work done at the Government Printing Office. In the ordinary sense the amount was not a transfer, as the work would have to be done by outside offices if not done at the Government Printing Office.

Mr. McLEAN asked for information as to the item for folders. They received about £32 per annum. Was that fair wages for the work done? There were twenty-eight females employed at the work, and he did not consider the wages paid were sufficient. It seemed that there was a little sweating in the price.

Mr. WARD would ask the honourable gentleman to mention any improper practices if he knew of any. The Government would see that they were rectified.

Mr. CADMAN would point out that the

wages were fixed under a scale, and the employees were paid under that.

Mr. KELLY asked if there had been any reduction in the rate of wages.

Mr. WARD said, No. The only alteration made was under the new regulations. Those who entered on probation now started at a lower rate.

Mr. BUCHANAN drew the attention of the Minister to the thickness of the paper used in Government communications. If these letters required to be posted they cost 4d. each on account of the paper used.

Mr. WARD would mention that complaints had been made that some of the paper was too thin. He would inquire into the matter, and if there was any waste it would not be allowed to go on.

Mr. FISH desired to draw attention to the increase of the vote for salaries from £17,245 to £19,421, and asked in what departments the increases had taken place.

Mr. WARD would mention the honourable gentleman that piecework to a large extent had been stopped, and the work transferred to the permanent employees. The amount previously provided had not been sufficient. In connection with the printing of *Hansard* alone there had been an excess of £400 or more, and that had to be taken out of another vote, as the item was exhausted.

Mr. FISH said it would be observed that the vote for compositors last year was £2,656, and this year it was £3,592. Was this increase caused by the employment of more hands, or by the change from piecework to the work being done by the permanent hands?

Mr. WARD would again explain that the work of the department had increased so much that it had been found necessary to transfer a portion of the work from the piece-room to the permanent staff, which had been increased by six hands.

Captain RUSSELL asked for an explanation with regard to the new dynamo, for which £400 was down.

Mr. WARD explained that the dynamo now in use was of insufficient power. The number of lights used was 280, while the dynamo had only a capacity of 200. It broke down last session, but temporary arrangements had been made. It was now intended to get a dynamo with a capacity of 600 lights.

Captain RUSSELL said that last year he had drawn attention to the desirability of the Government getting a more powerful engine, and lighting not only the Printing Office, but the Government Buildings, the Parliament Buildings, and the Government House, by electricity. The Premier at that time said there was a great deal in the suggestion, and promised to consider it. He (Captain Russell) had taken out the items on the estimates for lighting these various buildings, and found that they amounted to nearly £3,000. That appeared to be a most extraordinary sum, and he thought the whole of these buildings could be lighted with a single engine at half the cost.

Mr. WARD said the Government were considering the advisability of lighting the whole of the departments with their own machinery, but it was a question whether it was more desirable to have one large dynamo, or a small one for each block of buildings. There were times when the Printing Office was the only one that was lighted at night, and it would therefore be more economical to have a small dynamo there. The Superintendent of Telegraphs had been dealing with the subject for some time, and had furnished the Government with some information with regard to it, and he hoped that before long something would be done.

Captain RUSSELL said it was some twelve months since he had brought the matter under the notice of the Government, and, although it was well that the Government should deliberate before they took action, still that was a rather long time.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked what would be the comparative cost of the Government doing the work themselves and contracting with a company to do it.

Mr. WARD might say that the Gùlcher Company had approached the various departments with a view of that company's lights being used. It was a question whether it would be advisable to make an agreement with that company or not; but, with regard to the Printing Office, it would be better to have their own engine.

Mr. PINKERTON said that some time ago the Government had promised to make inquiry as to using colonially-made parchment. He would like to know whether the amount put down here was for imported or for colonially-made parchment.

Mr. WARD said about half was imported, and the other half was colonially made.

Vote, £24,428, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £19,966.

Dr. NEWMAN pointed out that last year the vote for printing "The Transactions of the New Zealand Institute" was £500, whereas now there was only £250 for that purpose. Why was that?

Mr. WARD said the Government were of opinion that that was sufficient, and they intended to introduce legislation this session to enable this reduction to be made.

Sir R. STOUT would point out to the honourable gentleman that he was bound to put £500 on the estimates under the Act of 1867. In fact, the Treasurer would be liable to an indictment if he did not do so. He hoped no legislation would be introduced to enable the reduction to be made. The amount which the colony now paid towards science was very small, and the keeping-up of the New Zealand Institute was absolutely necessary for the growth of science in the colony.

Mr. ALLEN hoped that when the supplementary estimates came down this vote would be restored to its former amount. This publication was contributed to by a number of scientific societies throughout the colony, and it was not only celebrated here, but all over the world.

He would rather see the vote increased to £1,000 than that it should be cut down. There were books of all sorts published by the Government which were not worth the paper on which they were printed, while here was a record of the transactions of the scientific men of the colony which was not only of considerable value now, but would be of inestimable value as time went on. He hoped the Minister would not break the law as he was doing by reducing this vote.

Mr. HOGG was very glad to see the reduction. He would like to know how many people there were who read this book published by the New Zealand Institute. He had always regarded it as a great piece of extravagance. This New Zealand Institute was composed of a few fossilised antiquarians who met together and read papers on moa-bones and dead monkeys, and that sort of thing. If the Institute had succeeded at all, it had been in making itself ridiculous. Some of these individuals were said to be slightly hairbrained and gone upon science, and they never gave any practical information to the public. If they gave settlers information as to how they could destroy pests, that would be of some use; but they did not do so. Why should this £500 be thrown away? It was a very nice amusement for the gentlemen who composed the Institute, but the public were realising no benefit from it. It was all very well for the honourable member for Inangahua to talk about these scientific clubs, but we were living in a utilitarian age, and there were a number of excrescences on the body politic which could very well be lopped off without any injury to the public interest. If this New Zealand Institute were swept away to-morrow not a man in New Zealand would be a bit the poorer for it. There was no reason why these fossilised antiquarians should not have their recreation, but they should have it at their own expense, and not at the expense of the people of the colony.

Sir R. STOUT thought the honourable member for Masterton had made a most eloquent speech in favour of the item. It was perfectly plain that the honourable member knew nothing of the Institute or its Transactions.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE considered that this money was well spent. The collection of information in regard to our flora and fauna was just now of the utmost importance to us, especially in view of the fact that our flora and fauna were being quickly exterminated. He thought that in a young country such as this we ought to devote some money to such educational and scientific purposes.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said the cost of printing the book was £528 10s. 6d. Was the Committee to understand that that was in addition to the £500 paid to the Institute?

Mr. WARD said the larger portion of the £528 was paid out of the funds of the Institute.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON did not think the subscriptions of members amounted to very much. He thought honourable members would agree with him that there was a great deal printed in that volume which it would have been very

much better to have left out. He thought the £250 now proposed to be paid would be quite enough to pay for as much as judicious selection would find was necessary to be preserved in the Transactions of the Institute. The volume was not carefully revised. There were many errors. He did not blame the Government Printer or his staff at all, but he thought the articles were not corrected as they should be. He was afraid Sir James Hector had not the firmness necessary for an editor, or he would keep out a number of the papers now included in the volume. It appeared as if the various articles went to the Printing Office without revision. It would therefore probably answer all the purposes of science if they adhered to the £250, as it would be better for the Institute itself if the size of the annual volume were reduced by one-half. And he said all this not in opposition, but in the most friendly spirit, to the Institute, which, however, was too much in the nature of a clique. It ought to be more popularised, and made much more useful and interesting than it was.

Sir R. STOUT would point out that the colony got in exchange for this volume a number of most valuable scientific publications; in fact, the colony got, he believed, every year publications which would cost several hundred pounds to obtain, but which were now sent in exchange for the Transactions of the Institute.

Mr. BUCKLAND was sorry that the vote had been reduced in the way in which it had been. He thought £500 was little enough for a colony like New Zealand to spend in scientific works. He was a member of the Auckland branch. They were struggling along to keep their heads above water; and it would be a poor day for the colony if, in bringing down other things, they were also to bring down science. Surely the honourable gentlemen opposite did not want them to give up all scientific research. The Institute's publication contained a number of most interesting and instructive articles on scientific and other subjects, and he was certain that it contained the foundation of scientific work and research which the colony would never regret having laid.

Captain RUSSELL said an honourable gentleman opposite had referred to this as being a utilitarian age. He would point out to the honourable gentleman that the utilitarianism was really based upon science, for which this century had been so remarkable, so that the more we advanced science the more we benefited the utilitarian age, which owed its advances to science.

Mr. CADMAN said the Committee seemed to be under some misapprehension with regard to this book. The Government had nothing to do with the contents of the book. The Institute furnished the contents of the book. The Government printed it, the Institute paying a slight margin on the cost price.

Sir J. HALL said the Institute collected and disseminated most valuable information on the original features of the colony,—which were many of them passing away,—on its

natural history, and on the natural resources of the colony. The development of these natural resources received great assistance from the labour of the members of the Institute. It would be not only a mistake but a disgrace for New Zealand to make a reduction in this vote, which would discourage, and might lead to a cessation of, the labours of this Institute. He deeply regretted that any Government of New Zealand should have come down with such a proposal, and he yet hoped they would hear from the Minister a statement that the Government would reconsider the matter.

Mr. WARD said that the Government, in deciding to reduce this vote by one-half, was prompted to that course in the first place owing to the necessity that existed in the present state of the Colonial Treasury to effect economies in every direction. This was one of a number of reductions which the Government had been induced to make. Applications were coming in from all parts of the colony for many important and urgent works, which could not, under ordinary circumstances, be carried out. The Government therefore looked to the votes which could be reduced without causing any serious inconvenience to the colony. This was why half had been cut off this particular vote. Before this reduction could be effected, however, it would be necessary to legislate, and if the proposed legislation did not meet with the acceptance of the House it would be necessary to provide the other £250 when the supplementary estimates were going through.

Sir J. HALL asked if the Minister would do that.

Mr. WARD said that if the legislation to which he referred did not pass that would be the course that would have to be taken.

Mr. FISH thought there was ample evidence before them to show that savings might be effected in other departments. He asked for an explanation of the item of £1,500 which was set down for insurance on the old Government Printing Office buildings, claimed by the Wellington Hospital Trustees.

Mr. WARD said the old Government Printing Office buildings had been leased by the Government, and had to be handed back at the expiration of the lease. In the interval the buildings had been burnt down, and, as the Government were their own insurers, they had either to pay the amount of the insurance or else restore the buildings. They had decided upon the former course.

Mr. FISH asked if it was a condition of the lease that the buildings should be insured for £1,500.

Mr. WARD said it was a condition of the lease that they should be insured for £1,500.

Mr. FISH said these buildings could have been worth nothing like £1,500 when they were burnt down, because he had never in his life seen so great a rookery. It was a far greater extravagance to give this £1,500 to the Wellington Hospital Trustees than to give £500 to the New Zealand Institute. On the one hand they had extreme niggardliness, and on the other lavish generosity. As usual, Wel-

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lington came begging to the Treasury doors for something it ought not to receive. It was time the city in which Parliament sat should be disfranchised. He pressed for a clearer explanation of the item.

Dr. NEWMAN said that many savings could have been effected under the heading "General Contingencies, £7,233," which appeared higher up in the estimates. That was an exceedingly interesting item when gone into. As the Government had been obliged to reduce by £250 the vote for one of the most useful works in the colony, it was curious to learn that hidden away in this large vote for general contingencies there was a sum of £94-odd for cab-hire for less than a mile. If they spent this £94-odd in helping to print the Transactions of the Institute it would be much more wisely expended than upon cab-hire. As regarded this £1,500 for the Wellington Hospital Trustees, he might state that the land on which the old Government Printing Office stood was a hospital endowment, and when it was leased, with the buildings upon it, to the Government for a term of twenty-one years it was a condition of the lease that these buildings should be given up at the end of the term in a state of repair, and, of course, there was the usual insurance clause, and, when the buildings were burnt down, either the money in question had to be refunded or the buildings had to be restored. The Government had no option in the matter. Upon a conference being held with the Trustees it was thought better that an arrangement of the kind that was now being given effect to should be made. If the Government did not pay over the £1,500 they would have to restore the buildings.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that, as a commentary upon the honesty of the Government in pleading that they were forced by the state of the Treasury to effect such economies as the reduction of the vote for the New Zealand Institute, he would direct the attention of honourable members to one of the returns upon the table, in which they would find such items as these: Alterations to Government Buildings since January, 1891—Alterations and additions, painting, tinting, artistic elaboration, furniture and furnishings, carpetings, draperies, clocks—the total amounting to £1,433 0s. 6d. Such expenditure was a gross extravagance, and the Government must plead some other excuse for their reduction of the vote to the New Zealand Institute. Then, why had they omitted the usual vote for fire-brigade demonstrations, some £400 or £500?

Mr. WARD said the reason why the last-mentioned item did not appear was that the applications had not come in when the estimates were made up, so that it was not known what amount had to be provided for. It was intended to provide for it. The remark of the honourable member for the Hutt about the £94 incurred for cab-hire within a mile radius was calculated to create a wrong impression unless explained. In all fairness the honourable gentleman ought to have stated that the hire was incurred in the reception of His Ex-

celsency the Governor and his family. With regard to the old Government Printing Office buildings, the Government had, under the lease, either to hand over the buildings at the end of the lease or to hand over the £1,500 of insurance. They had to do the one thing or the other, as the buildings had been burnt. It was a mere matter of contract.

Mr. WILSON said the Government talked the other day of giving a bonus for the manufacture of flax, but he saw no provision made for it on the estimates.

Mr. WARD said the estimates were made up at that time. That was the reason.

Mr. WILSON asked if the Minister would be prepared to put the amount on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. WARD said the Government would consider the matter.

Mr. ALLEN thought the item of £5,964, which represented the amount expended last year in "General Contingencies," was one upon which economy might have been practised. He wanted to know if it included travelling-allowances of Ministers, £876, and travelling-expenses of Ministers, £713.

Mr. WARD said there was a return on the table giving the full particulars.

Mr. ALLEN said he had taken the amounts from that return. Did that include the whole of the travelling-expenses of Ministers, or were there other items of that kind?

Mr. WARD was not in a position to give detailed information. He presumed the return spoke for itself.

Mr. ALLEN asked what was the meaning of the item, "Freight and cartage, £376."

Mr. WARD said that was the contract for cartage in Wellington, which was a large item.

Mr. ALLEN asked for an explanation of the item, "Travelling-expenses of labour delegates, £23."

Mr. WARD said that amount had been on the estimates for the last three years. It was to enable the labour delegates to meet in Wellington to discuss matters affecting themselves.

Mr. EARNSHAW was of opinion that £7,000 was too large a sum for contingencies, and he thought £250 of that might go towards restoring the Institute vote. They should stand by every department of the educational system, which, he maintained, did not stop at the primary schools. He would like to have some explanation of the last year's item, "Bonus for the manufacture of iron—amount expended, £300." The conditions under which it was put in the *Gazette* had not been fulfilled, and he would like to have some information as to how that £300 had been spent.

Mr. HOGG would like to know who got the benefit of the £94 paid for cab-hire in connection with the Governor's reception, which he thought was a piece of unbounded extravagance.

Mr. DUTHIE thought the vote of "General Contingencies" ought to have more attention at the hands of the Committee than was ordinarily paid to it. He found scattered all over the estimates contingencies amounting to

no less a sum than over £105,000. Amongst other items he might instance the travelling-expenses and allowances of Ministers, the expenditure under this head amounting to £1,589; beyond which, as the honourable member for the Hutt informed him, items amounting to £1,300 appeared elsewhere; and he thought the Committee ought to have before it full particulars as to how these large amounts had been expended. All the items included under the heading of "General Contingencies" should be fully set out, and such an item as, for example, the amount paid to the Inspector of Weights and Measures ought not to be included in contingencies, but should appear in the estimates, and be voted as a salary for the Inspector of Weights and Measures. The same objection applied to a great many sums of money which were paid out of contingencies without honourable members actually knowing what money they were voting.

Mr. WARD said, with regard to contingencies, he could assure the Committee that the most scrupulous care was being exercised by Ministers concerning the expenditure under that heading. It was impossible for Ministers to say at the beginning of the year what the amount of contingencies would be at the end of the year; but the executive officers of the various departments exercised the greatest care over their subordinates in these matters, and they were most carefully scanned by Ministers before the various items of expenditure under that heading were authorised by them.

Mr. WRIGHT said he thought there should be some better explanation given as to why the item for contingencies was so much increased this year. The amount put down for Ministers' travelling-expenses and allowances was £1,349 in the "Unauthorised" vote, and £1,589 Os. 11d. included in the item of £7,233 for "General Contingencies." Ministers had spent a large portion of the time in travelling from one end of the colony to the other advertising themselves, while their Bills had not been prepared. He thought it would be more convenient, and would satisfy members of the House, if the amounts for contingencies were distributed over the departments to which the different sums belonged, instead of being dealt with in one large sum. To test the question, he would move, That the item be reduced by £500.

Mr. WARD had stated already the position of the vote, but evidently the honourable gentleman did not understand him. The actual vote taken last year was for £7,000; the actual expenditure had been £7,620. The recoveries that had taken place had reduced this amount to £5,964. The recoveries were in connection with the cost of cables on account of conversion operations, and when the operations were completed they were transferred to the conversion account.

Mr. DUTHIE complained that they could not criticize the item, as they had not the details. That was what he complained of. Evidently the Minister had the details. The items ought to be shown under certain heads. Such

Mr. Duthie

large sums should not be voted in a general fashion.

Mr. RICHARDSON thought the Committee would not be doing its duty if it did not enter its strongest protest against the manner in which the present Ministers had refused to give to the taxpayers of the colony the details of their personal expenditure,—their pocket-money. The information had always been given by past Governments whenever asked for. He felt strongly the position taken up by Ministers; it was a contemptible position, and he would be prepared to block the estimates until they obtained a promise that Ministers would lay full details before the House. The expenses were extravagantly high, although many of the Ministers did not travel at all, and what was wanted was to "bell the cat." The Committee would not take the slightest exception to any reasonable expenses, but the Government were endeavouring to withhold information.

Mr. McLEAN would like to inform the Committee as to the amount spent by the honourable gentlemen opposite, when in office, on travelling-expenses. In the last year of office they spent £7,492, and the year before £7,208, under this item of contingencies. Their travelling-expenses in 1889-90 came to £1,500 2s. 6d.; those of officers, £494 16s. 9d.; as against the present Government's expenditure of £876. In the previous year the travelling-expenses of Ministers amounted to £931 4s. 9d.; for officers, £197 5s. 7d.; and in the two years the previous Ministry spent nearly £2,000 more than the present Government in the same time.

Mr. FISH thought the argument of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) was an erroneous one. It was no argument, when charged with making an improper expenditure, to turn round and say to honourable gentlemen opposite, "You did the same thing." It must be admitted that the Ministers had fallen away from the profession which they had made on this point when in opposition. It was obvious that the continual travellings and junketings of the honourable gentlemen were very costly. He had always opposed these large votes for contingencies. They were not characteristic of this Government alone, but of every Government; and when the Atkinson Government were in office he had opposed these votes just as much as he did now. One of the strongest grievances he had against the present Government was, that they had promised to reform the extravagance of the past, and they had not done so, but had been equally bad with their predecessors in this matter.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said the question was not a comparison between the expenditure by the previous Government and that by the present Government. What honourable members complained of was that the Government would not furnish the House with a detailed account of their travelling-expenses.

Mr. RICHARDSON said if the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) would look at a return which had been laid

on the table this session he would see that in his remarks he had been doing the late Government an injustice. The travelling-expenses had materially increased since the present Government took office. However, even assuming that the honourable gentleman was right, the late Government never refused to give details of their pocket-money, while the present Ministry would not give any information at all. It was not creditable to Ministers that they should take up such a position. The House had a right to demand that information, and the giving of it would very greatly facilitate the getting on with the business.

Mr. SHERA would vote against the amendment, but was of opinion that a return should be laid on the table of the House, within fourteen days of the meeting of Parliament, of the details of the contingencies in every department.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister where they were to find the further travelling-expenses of Ministers. In the "Unauthorised Expenditure Account" there was a sum of £1,349 for travelling-expenses. Was any portion of that included in the vote of £5,964 of which they had been speaking?

Mr. WARD said £876 was included in it. The return which the honourable gentleman had, showed that the travelling-allowances for the year were £1,349.

Mr. ALLEN asked whether that was in the "Unauthorised expenditure."

Mr. WARD said he could only speak to the vote now under discussion.

Mr. FERGUS would point out that one vote explained the other. Why should not the House be given this information? Why should Ministers be afraid to put a return of their personal expenses on the table so that all honourable members could see them? If they had been extravagant, let them say that they had been so for colonial purposes. The House was not going to deal hardly with them,—they had a large majority at their back. The Treasurer should promise, before the estimates were completed, that a full detailed return of these expenses would be placed on the table, as had always been done.

Mr. MOORE thought it was a pity Ministers had not given a return of their travelling-expenses. Under the law, Ministers were allowed to expend up to £1,000 in travelling-expenses. Therefore this £1,349 was in addition to the amount authorised by Parliament. Putting these two amounts together, it would be seen that Ministers had spent £2,349 during the year. If Ministers had taken the House into their confidence it would have been very much better for them, and would have saved all that trouble. Honourable members had repeatedly tried during the session to get returns from Ministers, but, unfortunately, they had not been able to get the information. Of course, if Ministers found that it was necessary to spend this money, he presumed the House would grant it; but when they had the accounts put before them in such a way that

members could not understand them honourable members naturally were suspicious.

Mr. WARD said honourable members were apparently overlooking the fact that in the "Unauthorised Expenditure Account" the amount of travelling-allowances was stated very clearly to be £1,349. Ministers had been willing to grant returns for travelling-expenses for the financial year, but they objected to returns for special dates fixed by members. The usual course was for returns to be for the financial year. There was no desire on the part of Ministers to shield or cover up anything in connection with Ministerial allowances.

Mr. ALLEN did not think the Minister's explanation was satisfactory. He wanted to know whether this £876 was additional.

Mr. WARD had already informed the honourable gentleman that the £876 was a part of the £1,349.

Mr. FERGUS said, as a matter of fact, the honourable gentleman was hoodwinking the House. He might point out that the "Unauthorised expenditure" did not show the whole amount, because a certain sum was authorised by Act. He wanted the Minister to give his word that the travelling-expenses of Ministers only amounted to £1,349 during the financial year.

Sir R. STOUT said they had spent an hour on the question of travelling-allowances. He always noticed that when a party had nothing else to find fault with a Government for they took up the question of travelling-allowances. He thought Ministers' salaries ought to be increased, and they ought to have no travelling-allowances at all, and then they could travel where they pleased. In the end, that would be more economical. He submitted, further, that it was in the interests of good government that Ministers should travel; and he thought it was a great mistake that they should be kept continually in Wellington. Since the abolition of the provincial system of government it had become absolutely necessary, if the affairs of the colony were to be well administered, that Ministers should travel through the different parts of the colony. He thought it was somewhat of a mean thing to be continually quarrelling about travelling-allowances and -expenses.

Mr. RICHARDSON said Ministers had stated that out of the £1,000 authorised under special Act £876 had been charged to the Colonial Secretary's contingency vote. He did not know how moneys paid under "special Act" could be lawfully charged to any departmental vote.

Mr. WARD said there was a return which showed the whole allowances and expenses of Ministers. He thought it was B.-25.

Mr. FERGUS asked if he understood correctly that the Minister was prepared to have a return furnished showing Ministers' expenses and travelling-allowances for the last five or six years, from the 31st March to the 31st March of each year. Such a return would show the travelling-expenses of individual Ministers of both the last and the present Government.

Mr. WRIGHT said it was not a question as to whether Ministers' travelling-expenses were

a few hundreds more or less, but whether the Committee had been correctly informed as to the total expenditure for this purpose. He wanted to know whether the amount was £2,989 4s. 11d. or £2,068 4s. 11d. In the return of "Unauthorised" the sum was set down as £1,349. In the return put on the table to the order of the House on the motion of the honourable member for Waitotara, and headed, "Return showing Details of the Amount expended during the Year 1892-98, under the Colonial Secretary's Vote—Miscellaneous and General Contingencies," there were details of the amount paid during the year ending 31st March, 1898. The return was marked "159H." Unless these figures were mixed up in an extraordinary manner, the total amount which had been expended on allowances and travelling-expenses was £2,989; and the House required to be assured whether that was correct or not.

Mr. WARD said the questions asked both by the last speaker and by the honourable member for Wakatipu were unnecessary, as both honourable gentlemen could ascertain the information for themselves by reference to the return marked "B.-25A," which was placed on the table last year and also this year. They would find there the amounts of Ministers' salaries, travelling-allowances and -expenses, and residences. The whole information asked for was included in these returns.

Mr. ALLEN said the Return 154B showed that in 1887-88, the first year of the Atkinson Government's administration, the allowances and expenses of Ministers amounted to £1,518, next year to £1,162, and the year following that to £1,696. The year 1891 was a mixed year, covered partially by the Atkinson Administration and partially by that of the present Government, and in that year the amount was £1,373. In 1892, the first full year of the present Government, the amount rose to £2,187, and last year it was £2,087. How, then, could they say there had been no increase in the Ministerial travelling-allowances and -expenses?

Mr. McLEAN said that in 1885-86 the amount spent under this head was £2,100, while in the two highest years of the Atkinson Government they had spent £975 more than the present Government had spent; but, on the other hand, the present Government had spent £652 more than the Atkinson Government had done in its two lowest years.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Colonial Treasurer to say whether, at the leisure of the Government, before the end of the session, they would lay on the table a return for each financial year, giving the expenses of each Minister.

Mr. WARD would read from the return, which the honourable member for Bruce had been good enough to hand him, the information the honourable member was asking him for. The salaries, travelling-allowances and -expenses, and residences of Ministers amounted in 1885-86 to a total of £14,712; in 1886-87, to £18,036; in 1887-88, to £10,494; in 1888-89, to £7,642; in 1889-90, to £7,785; in 1890-91, to

£7,681; in 1891-92, to £8,766; and in 1892-98, to £8,652. Now, as he had already said, that return was laid on the table of the House last year, and it was again laid on the table of the House this year. In addition to that, the return of "Unauthorised expenditure" showed that the £1,000 had been exceeded by £349. The only thing not contained in these returns was a statement of the expenditure from the 30th June to the 30th June. The figures he had given covered the full period.

Mr. RHODES said what was asked for was, that the Government should give the travelling-allowances and -expenses of each individual Minister. The figures just quoted by the Minister gave them *in globo*.

Mr. FERGUS said the predecessors in office of the present Government had been accustomed to give the amounts paid to each Minister for travelling-allowances, -expenses, and residences. Why would not the present Government follow the same course? What had they got to hide? Members were not asking for the total amount; they wanted to get the details.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the Minister had not answered his question. Would he undertake to lay on the table, before the end of the session, a detailed return giving the expenses of each individual Minister for any periods—say for each financial year, and going back three or six years, or as long as he liked? If the Minister had nothing to conceal, why should he refuse? He knew that the return would cost nothing.

Mr. WARD said that honourable members were changing their ground entirely. They began by saying the Government had not shown the amount of Ministers' travelling-allowances and -expenses, and it was then shown that a return giving the information had been laid on the table of the House; and, moreover, they were told that, under "Unauthorised," the expenditure was £349 in excess of £1,000. They said that that did not include everything. He then quoted from a return laid on the table of the House last year, and again this year, giving every item. The honourable member for Mataura now asked them to furnish the details. He could not give him the details that night; it was impossible. He suggested that the honourable gentleman should follow the usual course, by asking, in the ordinary way, for a return.

Mr. RICHARDSON said this was a most unsatisfactory reply. The Minister was aware that all his motions for returns were opposed. He also knew what was wanted—that was, the expenses of each Minister—and that such a return would cost nothing; and he (Mr. Richardson) took the Minister's answer to be a round-about way of saying No.

Mr. MOORE said the Minister had placed the information he had given before the House in an unfair way. If he took the last two years of the late Government's administration, it would be seen that in 1889-90 the expenditure was £7,785, and in 1890-91 £7,781; while in the first year of the present Administration the

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sum total was £8,766, and for 1892-93 £8,652. This showed that during the *régime* of the present Government the expenditure had considerably increased. With regard to house-allowances to Ministers, he found that in 1889-90 the late Government spent £576, and in 1890-91 only £407; while the present Government spent in 1891-92 £864, and in 1892-93 £955. Therefore these expenses also had been largely increased. Then, in Return B.-154, laid on the table, it would be seen that Ministers themselves admitted that the travelling-expenses and -allowances had been considerably increased. In 1889-90 they were shown as £1,696; in 1890-91, £1,378; in 1891-92, £2,137; in 1892-93, £2,087. The last two years' expenses, being the present Government's, showed an increase of £1,155. The Minister doubtless did not intend to mislead in the statement he made, but it was misleading all the same.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the item be reduced by £500."

AYES, 19.

Allen	Hall	Rolleston
Bruce	Kapa	Russell
Buchanan	Lake	Swan.
Buckland	Mitchelson	
Duthie	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fergus	Rhodes	Harkness
Fish	Richardson	Wright.

NOES, 35.

Blake	Lawry	Seddon
Buick	McGuire	Shera
Cadman	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Carncross	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Carroll	McLean	Taipua
Duncan	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Earnshaw	Palmer	Thompson, T.
Hogg	Parata	Ward
Houston	Pinkerton	Willis.
Joyce	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Sandford	Mills, C. H.
Kelly, W.	Saunders	Smith, E. M.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Hamlin	Hutchison, W.
Hutchison, G.	Mackintosh
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Dawson
Mackenzie, T.	Fraser
Mills, J.	Taylor
Valentine	Hall-Jones
Wilson.	O'Connor.

Majority against, 16.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. ALLEN said that some time ago a bonus of £500 had been promised for the first twenty-five miles of wire-netting manufactured. He understood that was likely to be claimed this year, and he would like to know whether the amount would be put on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. WARD said that came under the agricultural estimates.

Captain RUSSELL wished to draw attention to the item, "Compassionate allowance to widow of G. Sampson, £150." He would ask if

the Government would consider the propriety of putting some additional sum on the supplementary estimates. Sampson had served the colony forty years, twenty-two years of which service had been consecutive.

Mr. WARD said Sampson was not a Civil servant. His widow was to receive the amount of one year's salary. He could not make a promise of the kind the honourable gentleman asked for, but would promise that the matter would be considered by the Cabinet.

Mr. TANNER would like to be informed whether the bonus for the manufacture of salt was still under offer.

Mr. WARD said it was.

Vote, £13,966, agreed to.

CLASS V.—POSTAL AND TELEGRAPH.

Postal and Telegraph salaries, £175,981.

Mr. RICHARDSON moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 20.

Allen	Harkness	Russell
Blake	Kapa	Swan
Buckland	Moore	Taipua
Duthie	Palmer	Wright.
Fergus	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Richardson	Buchanan
Hall	Rolleston	Lake.

NOES, 32.

Buick	Kelly, W.	Shera
Cadman	Lawry	Smith E. M.
Carncross	McGuire	Smith, W. C.
Carroll	McGowan	Stout
Duncan	McLean	Tanner
Earnshaw	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Hall-Jones	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Hogg	Parata	Willis.
Houston	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Saunders	Pinkerton
Kelly, J.	Seddon	Sandford.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Hamlin	Hutchison, W.
Hutchison, G.	Mackintosh
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Dawson
Mackenzie, T.	Fraser
Mills, J.	Taylor
Mitchelson	McKenzie, J.
Valentine	Ward
Wilson.	O'Connor.

Majority against, 12.

Motion negatived.

Mr. FERGUS said it was rumoured that the Superintendent of the Postal and Telegraph Department was about to retire during the present year, and there had been speculation as to who would be his successor. He would like to know if there was any truth in the rumour, and, if so, who was to take the place of the gentleman who had filled that office for so many years.

Mr. WARD said it was not the intention of the Government to in any way force the retirement of the Superintendent. He had been

many years in that position, and was recognised to be a capable officer, whose services could still be of great value to the country. That officer had, however, offered to retire on a pension. The Government had not yet considered that proposal. He might, however, say that the Superintendent was entitled to retire on a pension, and if he wished to do so the Government would not stand in his way; but the Government would be glad to retain his services if he could see his way to remain in the Service. He could not, therefore, name a successor.

Mr. FERGUS wished the Government had followed the same course in other cases. A number of officers had been allowed to retire who were just as competent as the present Superintendent to do their work. The consequence was that they now drew good pensions, and were going about the streets doing nothing. He thought that was most deplorable.

Sir J. HALL said he had known this gentleman for a great many years—in fact, had selected him for the service; and he could not hear of his contemplated retirement without saying that, however anxious the Government might be to fill the vacancy adequately, they never would be able to find a man who would do the colony such service as he had done. If by any means they could induce him to continue in the employment of the colony they would be doing New Zealand a great service.

Mr. WARD might say, in answer to the question of the honourable member for Waka-tipu, that the cases to which that honourable gentleman had alluded were dealt with each upon its merits at the time they were under consideration. It would be impossible for him to detail to the honourable gentleman the circumstances which influenced the Government in arriving at the conclusion they arrived at in each case.

Mr. FERGUS entirely indorsed the remarks of the honourable member for Ellesmere with reference to the Superintendent. It did seem to him very curious that the Chief Postmasters in Dunedin and Lawrence, who seemed to be very capable men, should be retired after they had reached the limit of sixty years. It seemed to him that they were capable of performing their duties, and he did not think it was treating men well to turn them out in their old age. Numbers of these men so retired had lost the little amount they got in compensation, and from time to time were coming to that House suing *in formâ pauperis* for something to maintain them in their old age. He was sorry to see them going about the streets now. He considered that the compensation given to them was entirely inadequate to the services they had rendered in the past.

Mr. WRIGHT observed that there was an increase for letter-carriers on the estimates. Would that provide for an additional delivery at St. Albans, where one delivery per diem was found to be inadequate to the requirements of the place?

Mr. REEVES strongly supported the remarks of the honourable gentleman, and would call

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the attention of his honourable colleague to the necessity that existed for an additional delivery at St. Albans.

Mr. WARD said if the honourable gentlemen would make representations and furnish him with details he would look into the matter.

Mr. SANDFORD asked the Postmaster-General whether he was prepared to favourably consider the circumstances under which the unfortunate mailman between Inglewood and Purangi was working. The road was impassable for horse-traffic, and the work had to be performed on foot, making it exceedingly arduous, and occupying much time. The price paid for the contract was so low as to make it something worse than sweating, and he hoped the Minister would grant the man some concession in the shape of a bonus.

Mr. WARD said he would look into the matter.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the department had been approached on this subject, and the reply was not a very favourable one: it was stated that this man had contracted to do it for a certain sum. He wished to ask the Postmaster-General if it was the Government's intention to construct a telegraph- or telephone-line from New Plymouth to Mokau.

Mr. WARD said that question would be considered when the public-works estimates were before the House.

Vote, £175,931, agreed to.

Telegraph cable subsidies, £4,809.

Mr. DUTHIE asked if the Minister would explain what amount merchants had contributed towards reducing the amount of cable subsidies the colony was liable for.

Mr. WARD said this was the full amount the colony was liable for. The merchants contributed one-third over and above that provided in the estimates.

Vote, £4,809, agreed to.

Conveyance of mails by sea, £38,045.

Sir J. HALL said there was no sum down for telegraph extension.

Mr. WARD said that would be provided for in the public-works estimates.

Mr. DUTHIE asked if there was to be any finality to the cost—which was growing—of the San Francisco mail-service, and what was the basis of payment.

Mr. WARD said it depended entirely upon the quantity of mail-matter conveyed. The payment was on the basis of weight. The greater the quantity carried the larger the amount the colony had to pay.

Sir J. HALL asked what were the Government proposals with regard to the San Francisco service for the ensuing year, as the arrangement with the Union Steamship Company was for only one year.

Mr. WARD would inform the honourable gentleman that in 1890 Parliament decided to renew the service for three years, ending in 1894; and that contracts had been made from year to year.

Sir J. HALL asked what were the terms the Imperial Post Office agreed to.

Mr. DUTHIE wished to point out the inconvenience in dates of the arrival and despatch of the San Francisco mails. The postponement of one week in despatch from London would not, he feared, suit the coastal service.

Mr. WARD, in reply to the last two questions, would say that the Imperial Post Office contributed so much to a pound on the weight of the mails carried. The colony paid the transit-rates from San Francisco to New York, and the Imperial Government paid the transit-rates from New York to San Francisco. The despatch from London would be made a week later, commencing next month, and he thought the change a suitable one. The coastal service would be similarly altered.

Mr. DUTHIE thought it would have been better had a fortnight been allowed. It would have suited the coastal service better.

Sir J. HALL asked what the colony paid for the transit of the mails from New York to London.

Mr. WARD said the rate across the Atlantic was 1s. 9½d. per pound for letters, and 2½d. per pound for other articles.

Sir J. HALL asked if the service was paying for itself.

Mr. WARD said the actual cost to the colony last year was £7,486 over and above everything.

Mr. WRIGHT would point out the increase in the San Francisco service. There was an increase of 25 per cent. since the previous year.

Mr. WARD informed the honourable gentleman that the increase in the vote was due to the fact that payment for six months of the previous year on account of American and Atlantic transit was included in this year's vote. The payment was really for eighteen months instead of twelve.

Sir J. HALL thought the present position of this service was unsatisfactory. It seemed that the more letters were sent by San Francisco the more money the colony lost. Who was the Resident Agent in San Francisco now?

Mr. WARD said, Mr. Smith, an old New Zealand postal officer. He was very well recommended, and would fulfil the duties very creditably.

Vote, £23,045, agreed to.

Vote, Conveyance of inland mails, £27,180, agreed to.

Vote, Conveyance of mails by railway, £1,000, agreed to.

Vote, Miscellaneous, £45,850, agreed to.

CLASS VII.—STAMP AND DEEDS DEPARTMENT.

Stamp Department, £4,555.

Mr. RHODES asked whether the Government had received petitions regarding the refund of probate duty.

Mr. REEVES said, Yes; the matter was under the consideration of Cabinet.

Vote, £4,555, agreed to.

Land and Deeds Registry, £14,715.

Mr. RHODES mentioned that the titles to the Cheviot Estate were now registered in

Nelson. He suggested that it would be better that the registration of the titles were transferred to the Christchurch Registry, as the Cheviot was in the Land District of Canterbury.

Mr. REEVES said the suggestion was a good one, and he would see that it was carried out.

Vote, £14,715, agreed to.

CLASS VIII.—MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

Vote, Head office, £2,411, agreed to.

Public schools, £357,075.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked what provision the Minister proposed to make for normal schools.

Mr. REEVES said that £600 was to be given to these schools. There were only two of them, and they would receive £300 each.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked what provision was to be made for school-buildings.

Mr. REEVES said he hardly knew whether he would be right in anticipating the Public Works Statement without first consulting the Premier. He might, however, he thought, say that there would be a very much larger vote for school-buildings this year than there was last year.

Vote, £357,075, agreed to.

Native schools, £12,470.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable gentleman had issued fresh regulations with regard to these schools. He regretted to see it, because, unless he was mistaken, it would lead to a lower standard of Native-school teachers, in consequence of the reduction of their salaries. As he understood these regulations, the salaries would be made much more strictly dependent than heretofore upon the attendance at the schools. They knew how variable the attendance at Native schools was. In some of them the attendance must necessarily be low, and were the salaries of the teachers reduced accordingly the class of teachers would deteriorate proportionately. It was impossible to secure the services of efficient Native-school teachers unless the Government paid the market rate for the ability and character required. This was an item on which the House could afford to be generous. It was the one boon to the Natives on which no mistake could be made, and the colony would get a liberal interest on the money expended. He therefore hoped the Minister would reconsider the departure he had made during the recess—a departure, no doubt, made with the idea that it would be in the interests of the colony. He could not help feeling, however, that it was altogether in the wrong direction.

Mr. SHERA quite agreed with the honourable gentleman who had just sat down. He wished to point out to the Minister that very probably in the near future the Maoris would be on the electoral roll in the same way as Europeans, and it was most desirable that they should be as well educated as possible. There was no doubt that this vote should not be reduced.

Mr. MEREDITH asked whether the Native-school teachers were paid on the strict- or the working-average.

Mr. REEVES said, on the working-average. He might say that the alterations made had not caused a falling-off in the quality of the teachers. The best class of teachers were still being employed, and he had been obliged, with regret, to get rid of some of an inferior class. He and the officers of his department considered that the efficiency of the Native schools was never greater than it was at present. It was with regret that he had made the change.

Vote, £12,470, agreed to.

Vote, Industrial schools, £10,492, agreed to.
School for Deaf-mutes, £2,762.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked the Minister to say whether it was proposed to continue the institution where it was at present, and what changes had been made in the administration.

Mr. REEVES said most of the recommendations of the Committee had been adopted; in fact, they had been pretty well resolved upon before the Committee sat. The office of Director and teacher had been entirely separated from the boarding of the pupils, and a Matron and Steward had been appointed to attend to the domestic affairs. In addition to that, the system of having what were called "parlour boarders" had been discontinued, in consequence of the House having evidently expressed a disapproval of that system. Then, certain technical appliances had been obtained, and pupils who could be taught manual work were educated in the use of those appliances. Some changes had also been made in salaries—£50 had been taken off the salary of the Director, because he had been relieved of some of the work he had previously carried out. Again, he had appointed local Visitors, with a view of getting a closer supervision over this school, and he intended to have at least three Visitors, who would pay some attention to the establishment. With regard to the site of the school, he was sorry to say there was no prospect of changing it at present. The Government had a lease of the present site, and must continue there for the better part of three years. Besides that, it would take £5,000 to put up a proper building on the new site, and he did not think he could apply to Parliament with any hope of obtaining that sum.

Mr. ROLLESTON said, as he understood, the inquiries into the institution had, on the whole, resulted satisfactorily, and the Minister was satisfied that the institution had been efficiently worked.

Mr. REEVES thanked the honourable gentleman for the opportunity he had given of making this explanation. With the exception of one or two small defects that would naturally exist in any institution of the kind, the working of this institution had been most satisfactory. He had no doubt whatever that Mr. Van Asche was not only a most kindhearted man, but a very good teacher.

Mr. ROLLESTON said it was only what was due to Mr. Van Asche that that should be stated, and that his character should have been so thoroughly vindicated. Some changes, no doubt, had been forced upon the Minister, which he (Mr. Rolleston) could not altogether

approve of. The keeping of what were called "parlour boarders" had not the consent of popular opinion, but he did not think there was that evil connected with it which was generally supposed.

Mr. LAKE understood that the position of affairs was that the Steward and Matron had to send in an account of the goods they required to the committee. He would like to know whether that was a managing committee.

Mr. REEVES said it was not a managing committee, but a committee of visitors, who would advise with regard to what was required. The whole of the authority and control of the institution would lie, as it had hitherto done, in the office at Wellington.

Vote, £2,762, agreed to.

School for Blind, £615.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked what was the arrangement with regard to this school.

Mr. REEVES replied that there was an asylum for the blind carried on in Auckland, which it was proposed to assist. The honourable gentleman had no doubt been struck by this item appearing on the Education vote. A year or two ago it had appeared under the Charitable-aid vote, but it was now thought better that it should appear on the Education vote.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked whether it was proposed still to send blind pupils to Australia.

Mr. REEVES said they would not be sent there any longer.

Vote, £615, agreed to.

Miscellaneous services, £800.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked how this sum was to be distributed.

Mr. REEVES replied that a return had been laid on the table showing how this money was distributed. The largest vote had been given to Dunedin, the next to Wanganui, and the third to Wellington: £600 had been expended. As far as possible it had been spent on the pound-for-pound system: that was to say, the Government had given £1 for each £1 that had been raised by local benevolence. He thought £100 had been given to Wellington. It seemed to him that the Wellington school, under Mr. Riley, was deserving of assistance, and, as he had money to spare, he had given it to that school.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if it applied to evening schools.

Mr. REEVES said Yes, anything that might be called of a technical character. For instance, there were such classes in Dunedin. He had hitherto almost entirely confined himself to the extent of £1 for £1. He had refused to give assistance to evening classes of a literary character, and could only assist work of a technical nature.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the Minister had in view any general system of leading up from district schools—in connection, for instance, with the district high schools, or anything making the system general. At present it was spasmodic; there was no definite system.

Mr. REEVES said that in England the system of technical schools was worked largely

with the local bodies and by subsidies. Here there was nothing to begin upon; and, unless they could get the Education Boards to do something in the matter, it would be rather difficult to get a beginning. He hoped to get a Bill dealing with this matter passed next year to get a start; but, unless, as he had said, some of the Education Boards took the subject up, it would be rather difficult for the Minister to get a start.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if anything had been done in the way of specially recognising the services of teachers who were skilled in technical teaching.

Mr. REEVES said he thought it would be a good thing, and he would take the matter into consideration.

Mr. J. KELLY asked if there was any limit to the pound-for-pound grants.

Mr. REEVES said, Yes; this vote was for the whole colony.

Mr. J. KELLY said, supposing one district contributed £300, would that district get an equal amount?

Mr. REEVES said if he had £300 he would give it in such a case.

Vote, £300, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at twenty-five minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 17th August, 1898.

Third Readings—Awanui—Hicks Bay Telegraph—Stock Committee—Fencing Bill—Juries Bill—Deceased Husband's Brother Marriage Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READINGS.

Mining Bill, Wellington City Empowering Bill.

AWANUI.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA asked the Government, Whether their attention has been called to the fact that there are two telegraph-stations called Awanui, thus causing unnecessary inconvenience and confusion? He had sent telegrams addressed to Awanui, and the telegraphist had not sent those telegrams to his friends at the only Awanui he was acquainted with. They had been sent to a place called Awanui in the far extremity of this Island, in the Auckland District. During last session he sent a number of telegrams to his people at Awanui, but he received no replies. When he came back this session he had found those telegrams bundled up in his cupboard, they having been returned by the Telegraph Department. On his return home his friends had said that they had not received any telegrams. The Awanui he referred to was well known. It was situated near the East Cape; there was a Government post-office at the place; the

country round had been purchased by the Government, and it was also the terminus to the telegraph-line from Gisborne.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY replied that there were two places—one called Awanui and the other Port Awanui. No doubt great inconvenience was caused by that fact. The department would be perfectly satisfied to change the name of one place if his honourable friend would suggest some suitable name. There was great jealousy as to altering these old Native names. He thought changes of names undesirable, but in an instance of this kind it might be done. If his honourable friend would give him any suggestion as to another name he would be happy to forward it to the Postal Department.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE suggested that, as Major Ropata had had a great deal to do with getting the telegraph-line erected as far as that place, it would be an act of grace on the part of the Government if they gave the station the name of his honourable friend, "Ropata."

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA could not agree to the suggestion made by the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore, and he would prefer that his name should not be used. There were well known places on the coast, such as Hicks Bay, Tupaeoro, and Awanui. He should not like the name of Awanui to be altogether left out, but if it could be called "Awanui, East Cape," that would be sufficient identification.

HICKS BAY TELEGRAPH.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE asked, Whether the Government will be disposed to consider the desirability of extending the telegraph or telephone to Hicks Bay?

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY replied that he hoped to be able next day to give his honourable friend the information asked for.

STOCK COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY, it was ordered, That the name of the Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore be added to the Stock Committee.

FENCING BILL.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA moved, *That it be an instruction to the Joint Agricultural and Stock Committee, when considering the Fencing Act 1881 Amendment Bill, to make the following amendments: "Section two of the said Act is hereby amended by adding to the definition of 'Native lands' therein the words 'or certificate of title issued under the Land Transfer Acts.' Section three of the said Act is hereby repealed, and the following is substituted therefor: 'Except as herein provided, this Act shall not apply to Native lands except such as, having passed through the Native Land Court, are held under memorial of ownership or certificate of title issued by the said Court.'"* The Fencing Bill only applied to Europeans, and he desired that the provisions of the Act should apply to the Natives as well as to Europeans—that was, to

Native land that had passed through the Court, and the title to which had been ascertained as between the different hapus or clans of the Natives. No harm would come to the Natives from the application of the provisions of the Act to them. It certainly would be a means of punishing Natives who were too lazy to put up fences. The Natives in many districts had taken to improving their lands, and fencing them, in order to run cattle and sheep upon those lands, and even in districts where Native land adjoined land belonging to Europeans he thought it only right that the Europeans should pay for half the fence if erected by the Natives, and that the Natives also should be obliged to pay half the cost in case the European wished to fence his land.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE thought the motion was a very good one, and would be a very great step towards bringing about equality between the two races, which, until now, had not been properly recognised. That the motion had been brought forward by a chief of the distinction of Major Ropata was a strong guarantee that the proposal would be cheerfully accepted throughout the colony. It could not be denied that the difficulty of getting the Natives to fence their land was a source of trouble to the Europeans. It would do a great deal towards causing the Natives to utilise and farm their land. He thought the thanks of the Council were due to his honourable friend in the matter, because there had been hitherto some hesitation on the part of Europeans in bringing in a measure of the kind, which, though eminently a just one, was one which it had been thought might give offence to the Native owners in every part of the colony. He felt certain the Natives were quite ripe for the change, and the colony would do well if it followed the advice of his honourable friend Major Ropata.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY would suggest that the motion be amended so that it should be a suggestion to the Committee to consider the motion of the Hon. Major Wahawaha. As it at present stood the motion was imperative. He thought it should go in the form of a suggestion. He moved, accordingly, *That the motion be amended by substituting the word "consider" for the word "make."*

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND pointed out that the mover of the motion only asked the Council to join him in expressing an opinion that a change in the law was desirable. The matter being so important, it was very desirable for the Council to affirm the proposal, and to send it with the affirmation of the Council to the Committee. He would suggest to the Council to agree to the motion, which would go in due course to the Committee, with the weight of the Council added to it.

Amendment lost.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA, in reply, would simply urge the Council to support the motion.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Major Wahawaha

JURIES BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said it was a very small but rather important amendment of the Juries Act. If honourable members would look at sections 156 and 157 of the Juries Act of 1880, they would see that they read as follows:—

"156. If three-fourths at least of any jury empanelled on any civil cause shall, after the jury have retired to consider their verdict for a period of at least three hours, intimate to the Judge presiding that the jury have considered their verdict, and that there is no probability of their being unanimous, the verdict of three-fourths shall be taken and accepted as, and shall have the consequences of, a verdict of the whole of such jury.

"157. Where a jury shall have remained twelve or more hours in deliberation, and shall not agree as to the verdict to be given, the jurors of such jury may be discharged by the Court from giving any verdict.

"Such proceedings may thereupon be taken anew as if no trial or inquiry had been commenced before the jury so discharged."

It had been pointed out to him by high legal authorities all over the colony that very great inconvenience was suffered by jurymen in being obliged to remain twelve hours before they could be released, in the event of their disagreeing. The Judge at present had no authority to discharge them earlier, and the inconvenience had been felt by Judges, suitors, and juries alike. It had been suggested that the time should be limited to six hours, after which time the Judge might have the opportunity of discharging them. The same high legal authorities had forwarded to him that day a clipping from an English paper, in which it stated that an English Judge decided to discharge a jury after three hours. He could never understand why they should insist upon keeping juries locked up for twelve hours in the event of their disagreeing. He thought that jurymen ought to be saved the inconvenience which they must necessarily have to suffer in being obliged to remain practically close prisoners for twelve hours. The amendment was one which it was desirable to make, and he hoped it would meet with the favourable consideration of the Council.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said the amendment was an important one, as the honourable gentleman had stated. The only objection to it was that when jurors came to know that they would be discharged at the end of six hours they would not so readily agree as they would if they thought they would be detained for twelve hours. It might be that they would even feel inclined to shirk the duty of finding a verdict at all in many cases, or if they thought they could get rid of the responsibility of bringing in a verdict they might be inclined to do so. At the same time, he agreed with the honourable gentleman that the present law worked harshly when the Judge was quite satisfied the jury could not agree. Yet he had no power to discharge them until

twelve hours had elapsed. In some cases the six hours, perhaps, would not do, especially if the Judge thought the jury was acting obstinately and refused to bring in a verdict. The amendment was one he thought the Council would have little objection to, and he therefore would not oppose it. The question arose as to the unanimity of juries in criminal cases. They had given up insisting upon unanimity in civil cases, where a verdict of three-fourths could be taken; and it was an important question whether they should not extend that, at all events, to a certain class of criminal cases, where the whole jury might be kept locked up through the obstinacy of one man.

Bill read the second time.

DECEASED HUSBAND'S BROTHER MARRIAGE BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said he had been requested by the promoter, an honourable gentleman who represented a district in the part of the colony from which he came, to take charge of the Bill. He had, however, warned that honourable gentleman that the subject was a debatable one, and that his "debating-powers" were not what they used to be. But, being still pressed to take charge of the Bill, he consented to do so. It was a very little Bill, as honourable members might see, and he thought he might describe it as the very legitimate offspring of the Deceased Wife's Sister Act, which was passed by the Legislature so long ago as thirteen years, and had been since that time on the statute-book; and he hoped it would present itself in that aspect to the Council. Having removed what he might call the bar sinister which prevented a deceased wife's sister from marrying with her brother-in-law, there was no reason for withholding the same privilege from a deceased husband's brother who desired to marry his widowed sister-in-law. There was a well-known ordinary precept that that which was sauce for the goose was also sauce for the gander, and he knew of no reason why the gander in this particular instance should be treated exceptionally. The question of these marriages of affinity within prescribed limits had been debated all the world over during the last fifty years, and it had been debated in that particular Council with very great vigour on many occasions. He was himself amongst the opponents of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. He had opposed it on what he sometimes called sentimental grounds, arising from old associations and religious traditions of the faith in which he was brought up; but he opposed it mainly on the ground that as long as the English law was not made to conform with that of these colonies it would be an anomaly, and the disadvantage under which people laboured could not be completely removed. However, that law was passed, and he was of opinion that, under the circumstances, they should conform to it. There was no doubt that there were many cases now existing in this colony which would be greatly relieved by the passing of a measure

of this kind. There was one case, of which he had some knowledge, that might be accepted as the type of a great many others now existing. He would abstain from mentioning names, or even localities, but would simply state broadly the facts which had come to his knowledge, and which he believed to be perfectly true and accurate. There were two brothers living in different parts of New Zealand, some sixty or seventy miles apart, both of them married. One of these brothers died some four years ago, leaving a wife and four little children very slenderly provided for. The brother-in-law, when that happened, as he ought to have done, undertook to provide for the support of the widow and her children. They still continued to live at the same distance apart. A year after that first calamity that other brother lost his wife, leaving one or two little children in his charge. He still continued his contribution to the support of the other family, but he found that the necessity of keeping two houses imposed upon his resources a heavy drain. The law prevented him from making one family of the two by marrying his deceased's brother's widow, and taking better charge of the family than he could possibly otherwise have done. The wife, deterred by a sense of propriety, and bearing in mind the fact that that respectable lady Mrs. Grundy was at the corner of the street with her bonnet on, ready to come and see about it, abstained from doing that which would be proper for her to do, except for the law, which barred the marriage of affinity in her particular case. That was only one instance of very many; and, that being so, he thought the law certainly ought to be so far altered as to place that widow and widower on equal terms in that respect. The objection to these kinds of marriages of affinity were scriptural, and what one might call canonical. But, if they were scriptural, it must be remembered that under the old Mosaic law a man was enjoined to marry his deceased brother's wife, and it exposed him to certain indignities of a public character if he failed to discharge that duty. On this side, therefore, the objection to the passing of such a Bill as this might be said to be removed. In 1890 the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was passed in the House of Representatives, and carried by a very large majority. The whole question had been so thoroughly debated that honourable gentlemen would see that in moving the Bill it was quite unnecessary to go into the consideration of the question, and repeat over and over again what had already been said better than he could say it. The other Bill had been passed by a larger majority, and it had been exhaustively debated in the Council before it became law, and he thought that the present Bill was a logical and fitting result of the Legislation that had already been passed.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said that when the other Bill, the natural accompaniment of this one, was brought down nobody was more bitter against it than himself. For several years he fought that Bill, until it was, by a slender majority, carried. There were con-

ditions in it which, he believed, did not exist in any other law of a like character. What the honourable gentleman had just before said was absolutely a fact, that anything like scriptural authority did not extend to the deceased wife's sister, although it undoubtedly did to the deceased husband's brother. He did not believe in carrying all this piecemeal legislation. He would rather have the Bill so altered as to legalise all marriages in which the relationship was one of affinity merely. There were not many men who would be likely to marry their mothers-in-law, and it would not apply to marriages of consanguinity, but would apply to all marriages of affinity. That, evidently, was not the position as it appeared to the honourable gentleman who brought forward this Bill, but that certainly was the view in England when marriage with a deceased wife's sister was declared not to be lawful in 1835. He thought, if this Bill were passed, the next step would be to allow a man to marry his stepdaughter. He did not see that there was any difference between any marriages of affinity, so long as the law did not affect marriages of consanguinity. He therefore thought the Council should, in Committee, alter the Bill to allow of all marriages of affinity, which would be bound to come sooner or later if this Bill were passed. He did not believe in dealing with the question in a piecemeal manner.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said the speeches to which they had just listened showed the very great danger there was in interfering with the marriage-laws, because they had an honourable gentleman in the Chamber who was at one time strongly opposed to the Deceased Wife's Sister Marriage Bill, but who, together with another honourable gentleman, was now absolutely a convert to extending the principle. The honourable gentleman who had last spoken was prepared to abolish the law against marriages of affinity entirely, and allow a man to marry his mother-in-law, or his stepdaughter, or any person he pleased. He submitted that one of the most dangerous things they could do was to interfere with the marriage-law in any way whatever. It was well known what was the case in America; and they knew, further, that in other colonies this question had never been seriously mooted. In New Zealand, for special reasons, a husband was allowed to marry his deceased wife's sister, so that the children might receive better attention than at the hands of a stranger. They knew that in the Imperial Parliament a considerable struggle had been going on since the year 1845 in favour of a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, but it had never become law. Ever since Lord Lyndhurst's Act in 1835, any attempt to alter that law had been strenuously resisted. He need only refer honourable gentlemen to a very able speech delivered by Lord Selborne on this subject, strongly opposing any interference whatever with the marriage-law of England; and it was well known that that measure was strenuously opposed by a very large number of men of considerable ability and position in England, who gave very strong

reasons why the marriage-law should not be interfered with. He thought that the question had been dealt with in too jocular a manner in the Council, considering the serious nature of the question. He asked what would result if the honourable gentleman passed this Bill and abolished the law in reference to affinity entirely. Well, in some States in America they had amended the marriage-law to such an extent that a man might marry his stepdaughter, or might marry persons bearing almost any relation to him. The result was that the divorcees in America were simply not only a scandal to justice, but a scandal to the civilised world. Those marriages which took place led to divorce; and there was no doubt a like system would prevail in this colony if they passed the present Bill. The Hon. Dr. Pollen had referred to cases of hardship that had come under his notice, but he (Mr. Stewart) confessed that he had never heard any demand for this law in the colony. It had never been the subject of any request as far as he could remember, and the matter had never been seriously considered. There was no one seriously demanding this relaxation of the law, and why it should be introduced now he was at a loss to understand. The Bill was very difficult to understand, and he could not help thinking that the honourable gentleman who prepared it must have gone about it in a very offhand way. It said that marriages were to be permissive between a woman and her deceased husband's brother. How many marriages, he asked, had to be gone through between a woman and her deceased husband's brother. And was this Bill to be made prospective or retrospective? There was nothing in the Bill to show that. He hoped the Council would reject the second reading at any rate; and, in order to give time for further consideration, he would move, *That the Bill be read the second time that day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN said that, when his honourable friend got up to propose the second reading of the Bill, he certainly, like many other honourable gentlemen in the Council, suspected that they would hear something ironical on the subject, and that he would scarcely have taken it up seriously, as they knew what his views were before on the question of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill. All his honourable friend had to tell them now was that what was sauce for the goose was sauce for the gander. He thought that was the only reason his honourable friend gave for asking the Council to pass the Bill. When the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill was before the Legislature he happened to be in another place at the time when it was discussed, and he said then that if that Bill were passed the next thing they would have would be a Deceased Husband's Brother Bill; but almost every one who voted for the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill said, "Oh no! we will never vote for that: that is quite a different thing." Well, they had seen this Bill rushed through the other branch of the Legislature, on the invitation of a private member, without one word being said about it.

— Hon. Sir G. S. Whitmore

He could not say that he agreed with his honourable and gallant friend opposite, that because a principle had been once broken they should go on, and run riot in the matter. Surely, if a man could marry his stepchild it would mean the breaking-up of family life as up to this time they understood it. If there were cases of hardship, as had been said, owing to marriages of this character being illegal, there would certainly be a far greater number of cases of hardship when people were not able to live as brother and sister because such a Bill as this had been passed. That was a far greater hardship. He did not think it was necessary to say much upon the subject, for he believed honourable members had already made up their minds as to whether or not they would agree to every kind of marriage being valid where the previous relationship was one of affinity. He only hoped the Council would reject the Bill, without very much discussion, as soon as possible, and, he was almost going to say, with ignominy.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN had carefully abstained from going into the ethics of this question. It was pretty nearly as old as the hills, and had been threshed out in one shape or another for centuries past. But he heard the cry of the widow and the orphan, and he listened to that instead of to the old canonical plea against these marriages of affinity. They were now barred only by statute; they were not barred on physiological or any other grounds; and he thought there were strong grounds why the bar should be removed, and he hoped the Council would let the Bill be read a second time. He thought they should listen to the cry of the widow and the orphan, who were asking for the relief that ought to be extended to them.

The Council divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 18.

Baillie	Kelly	Scotland
Barnicoat	McGregor	Shrimski
Bolt	McCullough	Swanson
Feldwick	Pollen	Taiaroa
Hart	Richardson	Walker, L.
Jenkinson	Rigg	Whitmore.

NOES, 20.

Aoland	Johnston	Reynolds
Bonar	Kerr	Stevens
Bowen	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Wahawaha
Grace	Ormond	Whyte
Holmes	Peacock	Williams.
Jennings	Pharazyn	

Majority against, 2.

Words struck out.

Bill ordered to be read the second time that day six months.

The Council adjourned at twenty minutes to four o'clock.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 17th August, 1893.

First Reading—Third Readings—Departmental Papers—Education Board Scholarships—Painting Customhouse, &c., Dunedin—Taranaki Roads—Flax—Martini-Henry Rifles—Labour Department—Fernhill Coal Company's Railway—Labour Department—Native-land Purchases—Egmont County Bill—Riverton Harbour Board Empowering Bill—Restriction of Monopolies Bill—Gum and Gumfields Bill—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Wanganui River Trust Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

William Robinson Estate Trusts Bill, Kaia-poi Borough Council Vesting Bill.

DEPARTMENTAL PAPERS.

Mr. HOUSTON wished to bring under the notice of the House a circumstance that affected the deliberations of the Native Affairs Committee. An important petition had been before that Committee for some time, and he had sent to the Native Department for some papers that were absolutely necessary for due consideration of the petition. These papers had been refused by the department. He had written to the Under-Secretary on the previous day as follows:—

"The file of papers in connection with the Orakei Block are required in connection with a petition now before the Committee. Will you be good enough to send them to me as early as possible?"

That morning, after waiting for some considerable time, he telephoned down to see if the papers would be sent, and at half-past eleven he received the following letter:—

"With reference to your request for the file of papers relating to the Orakei Block, I beg to inform you that I am unable to produce official documents of this nature without the express sanction of the Minister. I regret the delay that has occurred in obtaining the Minister's decision, but as soon as I have had an opportunity of placing the matter before him I will at once communicate with you."

He thought it was a very unfair thing that a Committee set up for the purpose of considering petitions, and having the power to call for persons and papers, should be put to great inconvenience by any Under-Secretary. As Chairman of the Committee he declined to go to the Buildings and ask for a private interview with any Under-Secretary, as he considered it beneath his dignity to do so. Hitherto it had always been the custom that an officer of the department was sent up with any papers to the Committee. He wished to know what steps to take to obtain these papers, so that the Committee might be able to consider an important petition.

Mr. REEVES said he was very much surprised to hear the honourable gentleman, with-

out the slightest foundation, state that the department had refused to supply these papers. The Under-Secretary had merely said he could not supply them without the consent of the Minister, but so soon as he got that consent he would send the honourable gentleman an answer. The Under-Secretary had seen him (Mr. Reeves) that morning, and obtained his consent in writing to send all papers that were not "confidential" to the Committee, and the papers were now on their way to the Committee.

Mr. HOUSTON said the Committee knew nothing of that. They had had to suspend their deliberations on this matter for want of the papers, and it was improper for a Committee to be treated in this way by an Under-Secretary.

Mr. REEVES said the Under-Secretary had only done his duty in the matter in not sending the papers without the Minister's consent.

Sir J. HALL asked the Chairman of the Committee to state on what date he applied for the papers, in order that the House might judge whether there had been any unreasonable delay.

Mr. HOUSTON said it was almost a week since the clerk of the Committee asked for the papers.

Mr. W. KELLY said the matter had been before the Committee for some time. He thought two letters had come from the Under-Secretary to the Chairman of the Committee on the matter, and for two days they had attended the Committee with the intention of going on with the case, but had to refrain from considering it.

Mr. MITCHELSON thought the Under-Secretary was probably not so much to blame as the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District (Mr. Carroll). The petition had been before the Committee for a considerable number of days. At the request of the honourable member for Inangahua the consideration of the petition was first delayed, as he considered that, as the case was a most important one, it was necessary to have the file of papers in connection with the case. He understood that the honourable member for the Eastern Maori District, when asked whether the Government would have any objection to the papers being forwarded to the Chairman, undertook to see the Minister, and to ascertain whether he had any objection. He believed that on the previous day, and the day before, they had the promise of that honourable gentleman that he would consult the Minister in charge of the department.

Mr. CARROLL said there had been a delay, he considered, of one day, for he had promised on the previous day that he would see the Minister in whose department the papers were, and ask him for his consent to their production before the Committee. But, as the House had heard from the Premier last night, the Government had important matters to attend to, and this matter had escaped his memory.

Mr. SEDDON said a circular had been sent out in 1883 or 1884 to Under-Secretaries by

the Government of the day. He did not like to see officers blamed, and the remarks of the honourable gentleman reflecting on the Under-Secretary in this matter were unmerited, because that officer had strictly complied with the terms of that circular. The matter had been raised again this session about papers, and the circular had been revived. For the information of the House and of members of Committees, it would be as well if the circular were laid on the table, so that Chairmen of Committees and members generally might see how far Under-Secretaries could supply papers. He would therefore lay a copy on the table.

Sir J. HALL pointed out that the Chairman had said that the Committee had sent for the papers a week ago, and he thought the Under-Secretary must be to blame for not having obtained the Minister's consent long before that day.

Mr. SPEAKER said it appeared to him that there had not been a refusal to produce papers—in which case the honourable member would have been entitled to appeal to the House—but that there had been an absence of promptitude; and, no doubt, after what had occurred that day, officers would show more promptitude in future.

EDUCATION BOARD SCHOLARSHIPS.

Mr. GUINNESS asked the Government, Whether children educated at private schools are entitled to compete for scholarships awarded by the Education Boards; and, if not, will the Government, by legislation or regulation, authorise children educated at private schools to compete for all scholarships which children educated at State schools are entitled to compete for? He understood that some difference existed in the different education districts of the colony in the regulations with regard to the matter involved in this question.

Mr. REEVES said such scholarships were open to all children in Wanganui, Hawke's Bay, Otago, and Southland; in Auckland and Taranaki the lower scholarships were restricted to children who had attended public schools, and the higher were open; in Wellington, Marlborough, Nelson, Grey, Westland, North Canterbury, and South Canterbury they were restricted to public-school pupils. The Education Act left the question open, and regulations made by Boards were subject to the Minister's approval.

Mr. GUINNESS said the honourable gentleman had not answered the latter part of the question.

Mr. REEVES said the Government did not propose to bring in an amendment on the Education Act in the direction indicated by the honourable gentleman that session.

Mr. GUINNESS was not satisfied with the answer, and moved the adjournment of the House. He thought every encouragement should be given to any person who educated his child at a private school, and he thought the more they encouraged the education of children in private schools the better it would be, and the less expense to the country. It

Mr. Reeves

was only a small modicum of justice that was asked for in the question—that the system should be made uniform throughout the country; that, where public money was given for scholarships, children educated at private schools should have the same right of competition for scholarships as those educated at public schools. He was astonished to hear the Minister say the Government did not intend to embody this principle in the Bill on the Order Paper.

Mr. REEVES said he did not say so.

Mr. GUINNESS had heard the honourable gentleman say the Government would not bring in any Bill to deal with the matter this session. This was to be regretted. He apprehended this was the first time since the honourable gentleman became Minister of Education that he had had his attention drawn to the matter. If it was not the first time, then the honourable gentleman was neglecting his duty as Minister in not having moved in the matter before. It was a matter he would hear something about before the next Parliament was elected.

Mr. FISH seconded the motion for the purpose of saying that he was strongly of opinion that children educated in private schools who were subject to the inspection of the Government Inspector had as much right to compete for scholarships as those in the public schools. There were a large number of people who had conscientious objections to sending their children to public schools: he was not referring to the Roman Catholics, but to other people who thought education should be combined with a certain amount of religious instruction; and he said that feeling ought to be encouraged. Under those circumstances, he saw no reason why children attending private schools should not be enabled to compete for scholarships as well as other children.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON supported the honourable gentleman who had moved the adjournment in this matter. It was most desirable that scholarships should be free, and open to every boy and girl in the colony, no matter in what school he or she was trained. The Education Boards which had not moved in this matter should be incited to do so, even during this Parliament.

Sir R. STOUT said there was another side of the question, and it was this: that, if they allowed scholarships to be competed for by all, they would give the child of the rich man, who could afford to pay a tutor for his child, an enormous advantage over the poor man's child: that was the danger he could see. He would not object to the proposal merely on the ground of these children belonging to private schools, but he did not see where they could draw the line. He understood that the application of this proposal to the Catholic schools was the real object of the question. He would not object to the children of Catholic schools competing for these scholarships, but, if they were going to have the scholarships open to all, then they gave a premium to those who could afford to pay tutors for their children.

Sir J. HALL said that was not the question raised by the honourable member for the Grey. The question merely related to children educated at private schools.

Sir R. STOUT.—And there might not be more than three at the school.

Sir J. HALL said that was not the fair interpretation of the suggestion. He would not quarrel with the honourable gentleman if he only proposed to exclude the children of those wealthy parents who might have an unfair advantage in competing with other children, but he did agree with previous speakers that it was a very great hardship that children educated at private or Roman Catholic or Church of England schools, which were open to inspection by the State, should be excluded from competing for scholarships simply because their parents did not think it right to send them to the public schools, but were willing to pay for them at an entirely satisfactory private school. Still more objectionable was it that this should be allowed in some parts of the colony and not in others. If it was wrong, then the Government should step in and stop it; and if it was right, the Government was called upon to step in and provide for it all over New Zealand. It was not, in his opinion, right that the children of those who could not conscientiously avail themselves of the public schools should be excluded from competing for these scholarships.

Mr. BUCKLAND could not see where the point of the rich man's child came in at all. The honourable member for Inangahua, no doubt, thought it was a very popular cry to take up, but if the honourable gentleman's popularity was to be based upon the "rich man" cry he did not think the honourable gentleman would rise very much in anybody's estimation except his own. Did the honourable gentleman not know that the majority of children who took scholarships were the cleverest and most industrious children, and children of the most ability? Did the honourable gentleman think that if he had a child of no ability, and employed twenty tutors, that child would get a scholarship? The honourable gentleman could not supply brains to children who did not possess them. The whole objection was rubbish. If a rich man did not send his child to a public school, and that child had no natural ability, the employment of twenty outside tutors would not supply that child with brains. Attempts to cram children in that way would only stupefy them. A child could only take in a certain amount of knowledge: it must be put into him in very gentle doses. He did not like the feeling being brought up about "the rich man's child." He understood that the scholarships only applied to secondary schools. Public schools did not give the education they could get in private schools.

Sir R. STOUT.—Nonsense.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the children attending public schools could not spell properly. There was something radically wrong in the system. He might say that he did not see why, under certain conditions, the children from

private schools should not be allowed to compete for the secondary-education scholarships. They did not go through the same curriculum, and the chances were that they were examined on subjects they had not been taught very clearly, and if they could take scholarships under these circumstances they deserved all the more credit for it. It was all rubbish to talk about the rich man's child having an advantage. Honourable members must know it was ability and not wealth that was wanted to gain a scholarship.

Mr. HOGG was sorry to hear the remarks of the last speaker. If there was any one thing they should be more proud of than another it was that their public schools had maintained a very great state of efficiency, and he thought they had every reason to feel satisfied with the quality of the education imparted at these institutions. He thought there was a good deal of force in the argument of the honourable member for Inangahua that if the children in private schools were allowed to compete the probability was that a considerable number of children of the wealthy and well-to-do classes would be enabled to secure these scholarships, which, he believed, were really intended for the benefit of the poorer classes. But there was another aspect of the question, and that was this: that if they allowed the children in private schools to compete in the manner suggested, the result would be to bring in a new element of competition, and he thought that would be conducive to the efficiency of their public schools. There was no reason why they should not be allowed to compete as much as possible with the children educated in the State schools. Viewing this question from both aspects, he thought, upon the whole, it was advisable to make as few restrictions as possible, and that children in denominational or private schools generally should have the same right to compete as children in the State schools.

Mr. WILLIS thought the proposition that the children from private schools should be allowed to compete for scholarships with the children attending the State schools was a very reasonable one. He thought this was especially the case as affecting the children in Catholic schools, more than in any other schools. At the present time, Catholics had to support the whole of their schools out of their own funds, and it was a very great hardship that they should not have the same opportunity of competing for scholarships as children attending the schools of the State. He thought this would only be granting a very small concession indeed, and he should be very much pleased to see such a concession made.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable member for Ellesmere complained that there were anomalies in the arrangements with regard to scholarships—that in one part of the colony one system obtained, and in another part of the colony another system. Well, if the House was prepared to say that the system of education throughout New Zealand should be uniform in all respects, of course the honourable

gentleman's argument was conclusive; but, as was very well known, not only in this respect but in a great many other things, one system was followed in one education district and another system in another district. That was because the framers of the Education Act and the people had thought it right to hand over the administration of education to thirteen Education Boards; and he had yet to learn that it was the wish of the people to centralise the system and make it thoroughly uniform. As long as local self-government was to obtain, so long must they expect Education Boards to have different opinions and ways of management. This was a matter that had always been left to the Boards, and the proper course for any gentlemen to pursue who thought their Boards were not doing the right thing was to bring pressure to bear on the Boards, and not turn round and blame the unfortunate Minister, in whose department these scholarships did not rest. If this matter was so very important as the honourable member for the Grey said it was, it was a little odd that no member of the House had ever called the Minister's attention to the point until they were half-way through the last session of a moribund Parliament, when it was known that no new legislation could be brought in with any hope of passing it at this time. If any one was to blame, there had been a much greater dereliction of duty on the part of honourable members than on the part of the Minister; and, if this was a question of such burning importance as honourable gentlemen had endeavoured to make out, he begged to remind them that the present anomalous state of things was brought about by the principle underlying the administration of education in this colony, and that was the vesting of the administration in local authorities.

Mr. MEREDITH said honourable members could see they were on the eve of a general election. "Coming events cast their shadows before." He noticed that the advocates of the proposal of the honourable member for the Grey to give State patronage to private schools were those who supported the Private Schools Bill in 1891.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, no; not one.

Mr. MEREDITH was pleased at the stand the Minister of Education had taken as a colonist and as Minister at the head of the Education Department. He considered, if the House were to concur in the request of the honourable member for the Grey, it would be putting in the thin edge of the wedge. They knew there was an element in the country who looked with a jealous eye on the present system of education, and were determined to leave no stone unturned, if possible, to destroy that system. He contended that the administration of the Act by the different Education Boards had given satisfaction, and he was not aware that any Board had passed a resolution in the direction indicated by the honourable member for the Grey; and until such time as that was done—until there was an expression of opinion from the various education districts

Mr. Buckland

—he did not think it would be wise for the House to move in the direction asked for.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said, as one who did not support the Private Schools Bill, he was favourable to the suggestion of the honourable member for the Grey, and thought the competition for scholarships should be made open to children attending a private school.

Mr. GUINNESS, in reply, said he was sorry to think the honourable member for Inangahua had introduced the element of the rich and the poor man's child. He failed to see where that argument could be applied to the question at all. The honourable gentleman altogether ignored or left out of the discussion the point as to the anomaly that now existed. It was evidently allowed by the Education Act that this matter should be decided by the different Education Boards. But he thought the principal argument against it was that there should be no anomaly. The honourable member for Ashley said he found that those members who were supporting this proposal to allow all children to compete for scholarships were principally members who voted for the Private Schools Bill. If he looked at the division-list he would see that himself (Mr. Guinness), Sir Robert Stout, and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison), and others who had spoken voted against that Bill.

Mr. MEREDITH.—Sir Robert Stout was not a member of the House then.

Mr. GUINNESS said he was when this question time after time came up; therefore the remark of the honourable member for Ashley was rather an unfortunate one. It showed that his research or recollection was defective. It was well known there were a number of persons supporting private schools who, from conscientious motives, would not send their children to State schools. That was the soreness there was in the land. Everything should be done that could be done to make the colonial education system as widely acceptable as possible. Everything should be done by the House in that direction, and this was one of those matters that would tend to induce persons to send their children to private schools, which was a thing to be encouraged, because by doing so they were saving the State a very large sum per annum in the way of capitation, grants for school-buildings, and appliances; and if they encouraged people to do that they should give to their children a full opportunity of competing for these scholarships. Therefore he thought, if the Minister was bringing in an amendment of the Education Act this session, he should embody this principle in it. The honourable gentleman's answer was that the framers of the Act handed the matter over to the Education Boards to decide. If that were so, the Education Boards had to decide under and subject to the control of the Minister: they could do nothing in this matter without the consent of the Minister. A great deal more might be said on this subject, but as local Bills were coming on that afternoon he would not take up further time.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

PAINTING CUSTOMHOUSE, ETC., DUNEDIN.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked the Government, if they are aware that the painting of both the Customhouse and the Resident Magistrate's Court in Dunedin was done under a co-operative system, the plant being that of Mr. H. S. Fish, junior, M.H.R., the employes being those usually in his service, though the contractor was a Mr. Rosenbrook? During last session representations were made to him from Dunedin with regard to this question. The Premier would be quite aware that during the present session considerable debate had taken place on the floor of the House with regard to the co-operative system, and that the painting especially which had been done in Wellington under that system had been challenged in the House as to its merits. The question had been raised whether the work should have been done under the co-operative system or under the system of private contract. Another question was also involved, and, he thought, one of far greater moment.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was introducing debatable matter.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he thought the position of affairs referred to in his question should come under the notice of the Government, and he would like to know whether there had not been a surreptitious evasion of the law which provided that no member of Parliament should engage in Government work. He would also like to ask whether the work was done properly or not; because the money that was paid for that work was out of all proportion—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was going beyond the terms of his own question.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he would like to know whether the Minister was aware of the fact that the contractor who painted the Customhouse in Dunedin in July, 1892, and who also got a contract in October, 1892, to paint the Resident Magistrate's Court in Dunedin, made use of plant belonging to a member of the House on those occasions, and that the employes of the same honourable member were also employed on the work? He was credibly informed that the foreman of the same honourable member was continually about this work. He thought this was a serious question.

Mr. SEDDON said he did not think there was any doubt whatever that what had led to this question being put upon the Order Paper was the fact that the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) had taken objection in the House to the Government doing painting-work, at all events under the co-operative system. The work in question was done under contract. He was not aware to whom the plant belonged which the contractor used in doing the work.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he would like to ask a further question without notice—namely, Did the Premier think that it was a proper letting of a contract that practically what was half the Engineer's estimate—

Mr. SPEAKER said that was asking for an expression of opinion.

Mr. EARNSHAW would like to ask the Premier whether he was aware that the Engineer's estimate for the work was £46 for painting the Customhouse, and £30 for painting the Magistrate's Court, while the contractor's price was £25 10s. for the Customhouse and £18 10s. for the Resident Magistrate's Court.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no doubt the prices paid for the work were very low, but, as the system had obtained previously of accepting the lowest tender, the usual rule was followed. He was asked to give an expression of opinion. He did not believe that what had been done was a right thing to do, and if the co-operative system had been adopted in this case he thought they would have got equally good work, and have paid a fair price for it.

TARANAKI ROADS.

Mr. McGUIRE asked the Government, if it is their intention to call for tenders with as little delay as possible for all roadworks (I refer more especially to roadworks which had to be postponed on account of the unfavourable weather which has existed for the past eighteen months; the works to which I particularly refer are the works on the East Road for the purpose of connecting the Provincial District of Taranaki with the Provincial District of Auckland, and the works on the Junction Road to that point where it joins the East Road, together with other important works which are a bar to the settlement of the colony)? It often happened that tenders were not called for at the right season of the year, and it was only when the winter approached that tenders were called for. Winter was not the most suitable time for road-making, and it was absolutely necessary in the interests of true economy that advantage should be taken of favourable weather.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not argue the point in asking the question.

Mr. McGUIRE simply desired that contracts should be called for at the proper season, because if they were not it meant an increased price being charged for the work, and the Minister must know from past experience that such would be the case.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, if it were only necessary to give the information asked for to the honourable member, then he should say that the honourable gentleman had got the information. All the information had been given to the honourable gentleman verbally and in writing, and also to the county authorities, weeks ago. The honourable gentleman knew perfectly well what was to be done in this matter. However, as honourable members might feel some desire to know the facts in connection with this question, he had no objection to answer it. The honourable gentleman said in his question that the works had been delayed owing to the bad weather. That was so. Tenders had been called for the East Road on a previous occasion, and tenders would have

been accepted, only the roads were in such a state at the time, and the weather was so bad, that the tenders were much higher than the Engineer's estimate. It was, therefore, not thought advisable to go on with the work at the time, and the county authorities and the honourable member were informed that the Government would call for tenders early in the spring; and it was their intention to do so. He did not think it was necessary for him to say anything more on that subject. He might say a great deal more, because it was evident that the honourable gentleman took a delight in putting questions to him which had already been answered privately, and the information given to the local bodies.

Mr. McGUIRE said he thought it was more satisfactory to get replies to questions on the floor of the House.

FLAX.

Mr. HARKNESS asked the Premier, Is it the intention of the Government to appoint an expert to examine and grade dressed flax previous to export? If so, is the appointment arranged for, and what amount of remuneration do the Government intend to pay for the services rendered? It was generally understood that the Government intended to appoint an expert to examine and grade flax prior to exportation. If that were so, he would like to know if it would follow that a tax would be levied on the article to cover the cost of inspection.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was not the intention of the Government to appoint an expert to examine and grade flax this year. He had answered the question previously that session by informing the House that it would be necessary, in order to do what the honourable gentleman asked, to get legislation passed; and the Government did not think any legislation which they could pass at the present stage of the industry would be at all satisfactory. As the Government did not intend to appoint an expert for the purpose, of course it followed that no appointment had been made, and that no remuneration had been fixed.

MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES.

Mr. DUTHIE said a promise was given him the other day that inquiry would be made whether the Government had received any advice from Home by the last mail as to the shipment of the Martini-Henry rifles. He would now like to know whether they had any information on the subject.

Mr. SEDDON said he had looked over their monthly returns of shipments made, and also through the correspondence from the Agent-General, but there was no mention whatever of the matter, although in the previous correspondence it was stated that they were to be shipped early in March. That was the last correspondence they had had on the subject, and he could not understand why the rifles were not here, or what had occurred.

Mr. DUTHIE suggested that it might be as

well to cable on the subject to the Agent-General.

Mr. SEDDON thought that under the circumstances it would be as well to do so, so as to set the matter at rest. He would therefore cable.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Government, If they will suggest in what manner the Motion No. 11 on to-day's Order Paper should be amended to enable the return to be ordered?

Mr. REEVES said there was no opposition to the first part of the return asked for, and there was no opposition to part (4). There would be no opposition to part (3) down to the word "advance," but there was opposition to the last two lines of that part. There was opposition to the part marked "(8)."

FERNHILL COAL COMPANY'S RAILWAY.

On the motion of Mr. FISH, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House copies of any letter or letters sent to the Railway Commissioners or any of their officials by Sir Robert Stout, or the firm of Stout, Mondy, and Sim, having any reference to the Fernhill Coal Company's railway.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

On the motion of Mr. DUTHIE, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the heads of expenditure by the Labour Department during last year, amounting to £4,129.

NATIVE-LAND PURCHASES.

On the motion of Mr. MITCHELSON, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return of Native land acquired by the State out of the North Island Main Trunk Railway Loan and other sources respectively between the 1st April, 1891, and the 30th June, 1898, showing the date upon which negotiations were entered into in each case, the rate per acre agreed upon, and the assumed state of the negotiations at the latter date; a map to accompany the return, distinguishing the blocks affected by "The New Plymouth Harbour Board Endowment Act, 1874," and "The Wanganui River Trust Act, 1892."

EGMONT COUNTY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. TANNER moved, That the Chairman leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 20.

Blake	McLean	Sandford
Buick	Moore	Saunders
Fish	Newman	Tanner
Hall	Parata	Taylor.
Hogg	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Rhodes	Kelly, J.
Joyce	Russell	Palmer.

NOES, 23.

Buckland	Duncan	Hamlin
Carncross	Hall-Jones	Hutchison, G.

Kapa	Meredith	Taipua
Lawry	Mills, O. H.	Wilson
Maekensie, T.	Mitchelson	Wright.
Mackintosh	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGowan	Stout	Harkness
McKensie, J.	Swan	Thompson, R.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Allen	Ward
Bruce	Thompson, T.
Shera	Pinkerton
Valentine.	Smith, W. C.

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That progress be reported, and leave given to sit again.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 32.

Blake	Lake	Sandford
Buick	Lawry	Saunders
Carroll	Mackintosh	Seddon
Earnshaw	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Fisher	Mills, C. H.	Tanner
Hall	Moore	Taylor
Hall-Jones	Newman	Wilson
Hogg	Palmer	Wright.
Hutchison, W.	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Reeves	Carncross
Kelly, W.	Russell	Rhodes.

NOES, 8.

Buckland	McGowan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Taipua	Hamlin
Kapa	Thompson, R.	Harkness.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McLean	Hutchison, G.
Pinkerton	Duncan
Thompson, T.	Bruce
Valentine	Buchanan
Ward.	Allen.

Majority for, 24.

Progress reported.

RIVERTON HARBOUR BOARD EMPOWERING BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Captain RUSSELL moved, That the Chairman leave the chair.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 16.

Buckland	Mitchelson	Tanner
Earnshaw	Moore	Wilson.
Harkness	Newman	
Lake	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Richardson	Blake
Meredith	Saunders	Thompson, R.

NOES, 22.

Buick	Mackintosh	Sandford
Carroll	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Dawson	McKenzie, J.	Stout
Fraser	McLean	Taylor.
Hall	Mills, C. H.	
Hogg	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Parata	Kelly, J.
Kelly, W.	Pinkerton	Smith, E. M.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Russell	Hall-Jones
Buchanan	Duncan
Bruce	Pinkerton
Allen.	McGuire.

Majority against, 6.

Motion negatived.

Mr. BUCKLAND moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 18.

Buckland	Moore	Tanner
Earnshaw	Newman	Thompson, T.
Harkness	Reeves	Wilson.
Lake	Rhodes	Tellers.
Lawry	Richardson	Blake
Meredith	Saunders	Thompson, R.
Mitchelson		

NOES, 21.

Buick	McKenzie, J.	Seddon
Dawson	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Fraser	Mills, C. H.	Stout
Hall	Palmer	Taylor.
Hogg	Parata	Tellers.
Houston	Pinkerton	Kelly, J.
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	Smith, E. M.
Mackintosh		

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Russell	Hall-Jones
Buchanan	Duncan
Bruce	Pinkerton
Allen.	Carroll.

Majority against, 8.

Motion negatived.

Progress subsequently reported.

RESTRAINT OF MONOPOLIES BILL.

Mr. SHERA, in moving the second reading of this Bill, felt bound to state to the House that the Bill had been generally condemned by the Press of the colony. He had not seen a single article in its favour, and he had seen a great many leading articles condemning it. But he thought that the Press, although it was generally an enlightened Press, had misunderstood the object and scope of this Bill. The object of the Bill was to protect producers against combinations of speculators, so that producers might get paid the fair market price for what they produced, and to prevent rings and combinations from speculating unduly in commodities, and thus raising prices on consumers. There was no new idea embodied in the Bill. What was contained in this Bill was for many centuries the law of England. When men were of consequence, in the times of the early Plantagenets, laws were enacted embodying the principle of this Bill—laws against “engrossing” and “forestalling.” But as years went by, and wealth waxed powerful, these laws were repealed. In the reign of George III. a large batch of these laws were repealed, and the remainder of them were wiped off the statute-book in the reign of our present Queen, in the early years of her

reign. He proposed to supply *Hansard* with a list of these laws—about forty of them—which had existed upon this subject, but had been repealed: he would not trouble the House by reading a list of them.

Sir J. HALL thought it was rather straining the liberty which honourable members had. If the honourable gentleman had forty of them he thought he should be required to read the whole of those Acts.

Mr. SHERA thought there were very important orders on the Paper, and it would be impolitic to read a list of them on this occasion; but if honourable members referred to the United States *Congressional Record*, 1890, they would there find a list of the repealed statutes. He might be charged, possibly, by friends of the honourable gentleman, if he read them now, with having attempted to stonewall a very important Bill.

Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable gentleman should read such portions of these Acts as were pertinent to the Bill of which he was now moving the second reading.

Mr. SHERA said he intended to take the course he had already stated, which he considered the best.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON suggested that, as the laws of the Plantagenets were in Norman French, the House might excuse the honourable member for not reading them.

Mr. SHERA said that just recently—at least not very long ago—an Act had been passed by the Legislature of the American Republic, upon which this Bill was based; and Senator George, who opposed the Bill in the American Senate, said,—

“Certainly, there is no subject likely to engage the attention of the present Congress in which the people of this country are more deeply interested than in the subject of trusts and combinations. These evils have grown within the last few years to an enormous magnitude: enormous also in their numbers. They cover nearly all the great branches of trade and production in which our country is interested. They grow out of the present tendency of economic affairs throughout the world. It is a sad thought to the philanthropist that the present system of production and exchange is having that tendency which is sure at some not very distant day to crush out all small men, all small capitalists, all small enterprises. This is being done now. We find everywhere over our land the wrecks of small independent enterprises thrown in our pathway. So now the American Congress and the American people are brought face to face with this sad, this great problem: Is production, is trade, to be taken away from the great mass of the people, and concentrated in the hands of a few men, who, I am obliged to add, by the policies pursued by our Government, have been enabled to aggregate to themselves enormous fortunes?”

Senator Sherman, who introduced the Bill, said,—

“It is said that this Bill will interfere with lawful trade—with the customary business of life. I deny it. It aims only at unlawful com-

binations. It does not in the least affect combinations in aid of production where there is free and fair competition. It is the right of every man to work, labour, and produce in any lawful vocation, and to transport his production on equal terms and conditions and under like circumstances. This is industrial liberty, and lies at the foundation of the equality of all rights and privileges. The right to combine the capital and labour of two or more persons in a given pursuit with a community of profit and loss, under the name of a partnership, is open to all, and is not an infringement of industrial liberty, but is an aid to production. The law of partnership clearly defines what is a lawful and what is an unlawful partnership. The same business is open to every other partnership; and, while it is a combination, it does not in the slightest degree prevent competition. The combination of labour and capital in the form of a corporation to carry on any lawful business is a proper and useful expedient, especially for great enterprises of a quasi-public character, and ought to be encouraged and protected as tending to cheapen the cost of production; but these corporate rights should be open to all on the same terms and conditions. Such corporations, being mere creatures of law, can only exercise the powers specially granted and defined. Experience has shown that they are the most useful agencies of modern civilisation. They have enabled individuals to unite and undertake great enterprises only attempted in former times by powerful Governments."

He read this in order to set aside the statements made by the Press, that if this Bill passed into law it would interfere with ordinary trade. Thus, if honourable members would carefully consider his Bill they would come to the conclusion that it would not only be not injurious but be highly beneficial to the mass of the community. Senator George, who opposed this Bill on the ground that it was unconstitutional, spoke as follows:—

"These trusts and combinations are great wrongs. They have invaded most of the important branches of business; they operate with a double-edged sword; they increase beyond reason the cost of the necessities of life and business, and they decrease the cost of the raw material, the farm products of the country; they regulate prices at their will, depress the price of what they buy and increase the price of what they sell; they aggregate to themselves great, enormous wealth by extortion, which makes the people poor. Then, making this extorted wealth the means of further extortion from their unfortunate victims the people, they pursue unmolested, unrestrained by law, their ceaseless round of speculation under the law till they are fast producing that condition in our people in which the great mass of them are the servitors of those who have this aggregated wealth at their command. . . . The home, the farm, the workshop, are becoming the properties by encumbrances of lordly creditors, who, by methods encouraged and fostered by law in

some instances, and permitted by law in others, have extorted their ill-gotten gains from the poor, and then used the money thus obtained to complete the ruin of the people. The people ask us for redress. They plead for security against these wrongs."

It was quite true that these evils did not exist to the same magnitude in New Zealand. At the same time, it was beyond all dispute that in older countries they did exist, and it might be that they would grow up in our midst, to the great injury of the masses of the people. He had the honour to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR had no doubt that the mover of this very important Bill considered it of very great value; but he was bound to say this: that, reading the Bill through very carefully, he did not think any of the extracts that had been read applied to this Bill at all. The Bill, to his mind, was a very crude one; and he would like to ask the honourable gentleman, what did he mean by conspiracy? He thought the legal gentlemen would tell the honourable gentleman that there must be three parties to a matter to constitute it a conspiracy. Therefore they should have a more clearly-defined indication as to the meaning of the word in this Bill. He was not desirous of opposing the Bill, because he thought, in all conscience, the honourable gentleman was trying to do his best to assist some one. He (Mr. Taylor) did not know who that was at the present time, but he was bound to say that it would be absolutely interfering, perhaps, with the co-operative system of the Government; and he wanted to have this clearly defined before he could agree with it. If he could think for one moment that the passing of this Bill would assist those whom the honourable gentleman spoke about—namely, the poor and needy of the colony—he would unquestionably support it, because he never refused to do that; but, in regard to a Bill like this, he might as well say that trade-unions, or other bodies of that kind, could not act together and work out their destinies. He regretted to have to oppose a measure of that kind simply because his honourable friend was not clear in his explanation, nor was he concise in dealing with the provisions of the measure. He wanted to know why measures of this kind were brought in. He was quite sure that, if the honourable gentleman had gone to the Government and asked them to embody some of the provisions of the Bill in a measure which would be for the welfare of the colony, the Premier would have been most willing to assist the honourable gentleman in bringing in a well-considered measure. He was not going to take up much time in discussing the Bill clause by clause, because he did not think there was anything in it clear enough to justify him in taking that course. It was one of the vaguest of Bills, and he hoped the honourable member for Inangahua, who knew something about this question, would try and elucidate the measure later on. He did not blame the honourable gentleman for bringing in the Bill, but he ought to

have brought in a well-considered measure, and if he had done that he (Mr. Taylor) would have given the honourable gentleman his support.

Mr. REEVES did not rise to criticize this Bill at length, or clause by clause, nor did he rise to throw any aspersions upon the motives of the honourable gentleman who had brought it in. The honourable gentleman's motives, he had no doubt, were very pure. At the same time, the obvious effect of this Bill would be, first of all, to consign to gaol the whole of the trade-unionists in the colony; and, in the second place, it would render every member of a society of prohibitionists liable to a fine of £500, and to twelve months' imprisonment also. That, possibly, might cause the Bill to have some good features in the eyes of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish). But, putting that on one side at present, he must say that he was not prepared to throw so considerable a section of his constituents in imminent danger of ruin and imprisonment, as the passing of that Bill would do. Section 2 provided that "Every contract or combination in any form whatever, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce, made, entered into, or engaged in in the Colony of New Zealand, or partly within and partly without the said colony, is hereby declared to be illegal"; and a fine of £500 might be imposed, and twelve months' imprisonment inflicted, for a breach of this section. Now, if that section were passed, it would apply to trade-unions and similar bodies.

Mr. SHERA said the honourable gentleman had not read the preamble, which said, "save and except such combinations as may from time to time be authorised under any enactment having for its object the adjustment of labour disputes and the settlement of differences between employers and employed."

Mr. REEVES said, suppose the stony-hearted Legislative Council were to throw out the most useful measure ever brought before the House,—he referred to the Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,—the effect of this Bill would be to render the whole of the trade-unionists liable to a fine of £500 and twelve months' imprisonment. The honourable gentleman had, no doubt, looked ahead, and considered the possibility of that measure becoming law, as he trusted it would. They knew, however, that there was a possibility that such a measure might be rejected, and then, what would be the result of such a Bill as this? The provision in the preamble would not then apply, and therefore the full effect of this, should he say, most merciless measure would apply to the trade-unions of the colony. He thought the honourable gentleman should pause and consider the effect of this measure, which, he felt sure, would be very much more far-reaching than the honourable gentleman himself contemplated. If the honourable gentleman would strike out the clause he had referred to, he saw no great reason why the rest of the Bill should not be read a second time, and then they might consider the measure clause by

clause in Committee. Possibly the honourable gentleman might like to have the Bill referred to the Labour Bills Committee. But, speaking seriously, he thought the 2nd clause ought not to be passed by the House, because its effects would be of a most tyrannical character.

Mr. BUCKLAND would like to say a word or two on this Bill. He did not think the preamble would have the effect which the mover of the Bill said it would have. He thought, in fact, that it would have an opposite effect, because he did not think the objects of trade-unions were solely the settlement of trade disputes. He thought, rather, they were formed with a view to benefiting their members by trying to get a little more money out of their employers than they otherwise might get. He thought, too, that the Government might come under the provisions of this Bill; and so might the Railway Commissioners, who owned the railways, and were thus great monopolists. Then, the Government officials in charge of the Post Office and telegraphs would come under the Bill for a similar reason, and they would have to be put down with the strong arm of the law if this Bill were carried. It would be a very serious measure indeed to pass. He could not tell where the honourable gentleman procured the opinions which he read in support of his case. He did not think, especially in a colony like this, that they required a Bill of this character. One effect of the Bill would be to repeal all the patent laws of the colony, for no one was to be allowed to have a monopoly of anything. Thus the Bill would be a great blow against the people trying to make new inventions. It was quite clear the Bill would have this effect. Then, there was another thing he would like to ask the honourable member. Why did the honourable gentleman confine the Bill to trade and commerce? Why not apply it to intelligence and wit, and thus prevent any single member from having a monopoly of saying all the short and clever things in his speech? Why, the honourable gentleman himself might be considered to possess a monopoly of saying short and clever things in that House, and if this Bill became law the honourable gentleman ought to be put in gaol at once.

Mr. SEDDON rose to a point of order. He did not think it was right, or in accordance with the Standing Orders, that any honourable member should say that any other honourable member should be put in gaol at once.

Mr. SPEAKER said he understood that the honourable gentleman's remarks were not made in earnest.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Withdraw.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he would withdraw the words, and explain the way in which he used them. He used them in this way: If the honourable gentleman who brought in this Bill took the Bill as being passed already, the honourable gentleman himself might come under the operation of it at once, because any person bringing in a Bill of this sort ought, at any rate, to practise what he preached. He

Mr. Taylor

must admit that he considered this a most extraordinary Bill. He presumed its provisions would apply to land, because commerce applied to land, and therefore this was a socialistic Bill. "Any person who shall monopolize or attempt to monopolize." If a person, for instance, were to buy a loaf of bread, and thus secure a monopoly of that loaf, the Crown Prosecutor might prosecute him and have him fined £500 and sent to gaol for twelve months, because he was really attempting to monopolize that loaf of bread. The only way the unfortunate person could get out of the difficulty would be to give the loaf away to the first man who asked him for it, or who looked at him. Honourable members would not be allowed to have the exclusive possession of seats in that House, for, according to the Bill, they would be monopolizing what ought to belong to everybody. He was afraid the honourable gentleman had not thoroughly considered the nature of this measure. He supposed the honourable gentleman would say that it applied only to trade and commerce; but he would ask the honourable gentleman, what was trade and what was commerce? He ought to have had an interpretation in the Bill of these terms. The provisions of the Bill were very serious indeed. The measure would even destroy our marriage-laws. One did not know where the provisions of the Bill would begin and end. He was afraid the honourable gentleman had brought the Bill in for the purpose of getting a monopoly of the good opinion of the electors of Auckland, and wished to use that monopoly at the next election; and he thought the honourable gentleman ought to be restrained. The Bill was also drawn in a very funny manner. The 2nd clause read thus:—

"From and after the coming into operation of this Act every contract or combination in any form whatever, or conspiracy, in restraint of trade or commerce made, entered into, or engaged in in the Colony of New Zealand, or partly within and partly without the said colony, is hereby declared to be illegal."

So that no contract or combination in any form whatever could be made: it was declared illegal and must be restrained, and the parties put in gaol. They might abolish all their laws if this Bill came into force. It was no wonder the honourable gentleman read out some forty-five Acts which he desired to repeal. The honourable gentleman might repeal the whole of the laws, and then this Bill would be our future law. It would do away with everything. It was a violently tyrannical measure. For instance, a merchant might wish to buy a ton or two of flour or sugar, but by the provisions of this Bill he would be restrained from doing so. So far as he could see, it would do away with the wholesale merchants altogether, and also with the shopkeepers, and they would not be able any longer to circulate the goods of this world. There was no doubt it would have this effect. He was quite certain that the honourable gentleman had drafted his Bill well. The honourable member for the Buller said it would also have the effect of doing away with the

lunatic asylums. He had no doubt that those institutions enjoyed some kind of that monopoly which the honourable gentleman wished to do away with or to put under restraint, and this Bill might have the effect of doing away with their power of restraining people there. In fact, they scarcely knew what it would not do, seeing that its scope was so far-reaching and its provisions so very peculiar. He thought it very wrong. He would advise the honourable member to withdraw the Bill. The Bill they had before them the other day was withdrawn, and he must say the one brought in in its place was a very much better Bill. He hoped the honourable gentleman would make this a more comprehensible measure, and, in the compass of six or eight pages, say exactly what he meant, and indicate definitely the kind of monopolies and combinations he would restrain. He would ask, would he restrain the timber-mills? The Kauri Timber Company had got a monopoly of that trade in Auckland—he did not say the whole of the monopoly of the trade, but a part of it, for monopoly did not necessarily embrace the whole of a trade; it might be only a part and still be a monopoly, no matter how small it might be. If the Bill applied to monopolies in timber, it would also apply to monopolies in gum, and flax, and in shops, and, in fact, to every department of trade in the colony. This sort of thing would bring them down to one universal level. He was sorry the honourable gentleman had not reserved himself for better things, instead of giving the whole of his life to this Bill. He believed it was a "fad" of his, and that he had been thinking of this Bill during the whole of his life—reading piles of books upon the subject. He had attempted that evening to give them the benefit of some of his reading, but, unfortunately, he lost his place in the book. He (Mr. Buckland) really thought the House was competent to restrain anything in the nature of a monopoly of trade without a Bill of this sort. The Minister of Labour, in that House, had been introducing a whole lot of Bills that distinctly went in the direction of a restraint upon trade, as, for instance, the Shop-hours Bill, the Shops and Shop-assistants Bill, the Factories Bill, and so on. All these were conspiracies to restrain trade. The Government were trying to restrain trade in the colony, and every one who voted to pass the Shop-hours Bill and these other Bills might, under the Bill of the honourable gentleman, be fined £500, and put in gaol unless he paid the fine. This Bill did not exclude acts of Parliament; but it started in a fresh direction all our social world and life. He knew that the honourable gentleman was very powerful, and that all he had to do in order to get his Bill passed was to ask that it might be read a second time. But he hoped the honourable gentleman, being strong, would also be merciful to his kind, and not inflict this evil on the country. It would be worse than an eruption of Tarawera, for it would bring upon the colony one great deluge of disaster. He would not say anything further, but he hoped the Bill would not be read a second time. He

was going to say that he would move that the Bill be read a second time that day nine hundred and ninety-nine years hence.

Mr. SPEAKER said that would not be a proper amendment.

Mr. BUCKLAND said no shorter time would suit him, so he would not move an amendment at all.

Mr. FISH believed that almost every member of the House entertained a feeling of the very highest respect for the honourable gentleman who had moved the second reading of this Bill, and he very much regretted that it fell to his lot to tell the honourable gentleman—or to insinuate, at any rate—that he really did not apprehend the importance of the position he was taking up that evening, because he had put before them that night a Bill really of the greatest magnitude—a Bill so far-reaching in its effects that he was perfectly certain the honourable gentleman failed utterly and entirely to estimate where he was leading them; and yet a measure of this gigantic character—of this large and far-reaching character—he introduced in a short speech of about ten minutes! And what did he tell them more? He looked at a large volume lying before him, in which, apparently, he had marked out for quotation a special passage of great power, and, no doubt, applicable to the matter in hand, but, unfortunately, he could not find the place; and then he read speeches made by Senator Sherman and Senator George. He read them those speeches made upon a Bill brought into the American Senate. Now, they did not want to be told—and, if they did, the honourable gentleman did not tell them—that the circumstances which existed in America did not exist here. It might be quite *à propos* and a very desirable measure to introduce in that great country,—which the honourable member for Selwyn called the greatest country in the world,—where so much abuse existed, and where, no doubt, gigantic monopolies existed; but he really must confess that he thought it was an insult to the intelligence of this free and happy country to introduce a Bill of the kind here. His honourable friend must be advised of this: that he did not seem to have risen to the conception of what a statesman should be. There was an old Latin saying which was, *Multum in parvo*; but that saying did not, he feared, apply so far as the honourable gentleman's political capacity was concerned. Small he was—

Mr. O'CONOR rose to a point of order. He thought Mr. Speaker would scarcely allow any member of the House to make personal references to an honourable member's size.

Mr. SPEAKER did not catch what the honourable gentleman's point of order was.

Mr. O'CONOR said the honourable gentleman was referring to a member of the House as being a small member. He referred to the smallness of the size of an honourable member.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable member, of course, should not make any remarks

Mr. Buckland

levelled at the personal appearance or characteristics of any member of the House.

Mr. FISH was not intending to do anything of the kind, and he was really surprised that a gentleman of such long experience in the House as the honourable member for the Buller should raise such a ridiculous point of order as he had just done.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Order, order.

Mr. FISH said while Mr. Speaker was prepared, as he always was, to exercise the control which belonged to the Chair, he would always bow cheerfully to his ruling; but these reiterated cries of "Order, order" from the honourable member for the Buller had no more effect on him than water falling on a duck's back, because he did not recognise the right of the honourable gentleman to call out "Order, order" in that authoritative way. To the slightest word from the Chair he would ever bow with the greatest docility and humility; but no other honourable member, while Mr. Speaker occupied his present position, had any right to call another member of the House to order. He trusted his honourable friend would restrain the impetuosity characteristic of the country to which he belonged, and not interrupt him further in the current of his remarks, because one found it a difficult thing to run back. He had been about to say, when interrupted, that the honourable gentleman (Mr. Shera) in his ideas of politics and of the political necessities of the day, did not rise to the height which he (Mr. Fish) knew his aspirations would lead him to achieve. He had crude ideas that something was wrong in this world, and he had said to himself, like one of Shakespeare's characters,—

— O cursed spite!

That ever I was born to set it right.

The honourable gentleman knew or judged that something was wrong, and he had a dim glimmering light in his brain as to something which ought to be done, but he never seemed to be able to grasp the right manner in which to do it. He had given them that evening an example of the fact, because he had introduced this far-reaching Bill, this terrible measure as it had been shown to be by various speakers, without seeking to explain it in one single iota or degree. He had simply read a few passages from speeches of American senators; and then, when he (Mr. Fish) was opening his ears and riveting his attention on the honourable gentleman to get some pearls of wisdom, it might be, of the honourable gentleman's own making, he suddenly surprised him (Mr. Fish), and appalled the House which was listening to him, by quietly resuming his seat. In acting in that manner did he think he was treating that august Assembly with that respect it was entitled to demand when a gentleman presumed to bring into the House a Bill of this important character? The honourable gentleman told them that this was the law of the land in the days of the Plantagenets. He stated that it was the law in the old days in England some centuries ago, and he said that the law had been from time to time altered since then;

and he came at last to the admission of the fact that a great number of laws of this character had been repealed in the days of our own gracious Sovereign, Queen Victoria. Now, what a lesson should this teach the honourable gentleman and this House! The law which he was now seeking to re-enact having been the law of the days of the Plantagenets, and having been repealed since then, and the last vestiges of it repealed as late as the days of the present Sovereign of our country, did it not show that this law that he was seeking to implant in our Constitution was a law which civilisation had instructed the nation to repeal and utterly do away with? And his honourable friend, in spite of his profession of Liberalism, in spite of the fact that he represented the chief city of the colony, the brightest gem in the New Zealand diadem—the City of Auckland—wished to imperil his own reputation, and also to dim the lustre of the city from which he came, by introducing a Bill to re-enact the laws of several centuries ago. He had been surprised at his honourable friend's lack of wisdom in taking that action. He said that as wealth waxed powerful these laws were wiped off the statute-book. As wealth and civilisation grew, of course people were able to do those things which they could not do before wealth and civilisation grew; and the honourable gentleman said that, therefore, because wealth waxed powerful, they should revert to the old, old days of long ago. He could not see himself how a Bill of the kind would benefit the capitalists or small traders, and his honourable friend made no attempt to prove that fact, but contented himself with the bare assertion. As the honourable gentleman himself said on a former occasion, assertion was not argument.

Mr. SHERA.—I did not say so.

Mr. FISH said some honourable gentleman equally talented with the honourable member said so. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say it was quite true that those evils did not exist in this country. Then, he would ask his honourable friend, if he admitted that those evils did not exist in this country, why, in the name of fortune, was there any necessity for him to attempt to bring in a measure to prevent some wrong which he admitted did not exist? His honourable friend might think that if such wrong did not exist now it might exist by-and-by. Well, of course it was wise and prudent to look somewhat ahead of the present moment; but he (Mr. Fish) did not think there was anything in our political or commercial situation at the present time which would justify them in fearing either now or, at any rate, in the immediate future that there would be any attempts made to crush the commerce of the country. He did not think there was any necessity for passing a measure of that kind. When the time arrived it might be done, but he should be very sorry to think that the time would arrive when they should want a law of the kind. But he would like to say that when the necessity arose for such a measure it was not a private member

of the House who should bring it in. It was a duty that devolved upon the Government of the country to bring in such a measure whenever the interests of the country demanded it. He might also say it would be a happy time for Parliament if they could bring themselves to refrain from those individual attempts at drastic legislation. His honourable friend did not mean it, but it seemed to him it was very presumptuous on the part of any honourable gentleman, whether of the political status of his honourable friend or of the much higher status in the political world of another member of that House, to attempt to introduce legislation of so very grave a character. It was, in his opinion, a presumptuous effort, which ought not to be recognised or tolerated any more by the members of that Assembly. The honourable member for Sydenham very naively said, and very aptly also,—for the honourable gentleman was frequently very apt in his remarks,—that that Bill, if carried, might interfere with the system of co-operative works which the Government were carrying on at the present time. Well, he could assure his honourable friend that if there were anything at all that would induce him to vote for the second reading of this measure it would be that very idea that this measure would stop the Government in their mad career of folly and extravagance upon which they had entered in respect of co-operative works. But he did not think it would have that effect. The honourable member for Christchurch City also rebuked the mover of the Bill by saying that the Bill was not clear and lucid; but the Bill was much more lucid than the honourable gentleman's speech was.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Why?

Mr. FISH said the Bill was understandable to a certain extent, but the speech was not. He could not understand the honourable gentleman's speech at all. He should have concluded that he was not really referring to the Bill now before the House had not he known that he was doing so, because nothing the honourable gentleman had said, in his (Mr. Fish's) judgment, appealed to the sense of the House in any way so as to induce them to pass a measure of the kind. The Minister of Education criticized the Bill, and one could not say that he did so in the very kindly manner which he (Mr. Fish) was exhibiting with regard to the Bill. The honourable gentleman, as usual, tried to be satirical over the measure, and no doubt in doing so he wounded the susceptibilities of the honourable gentleman.

Mr. SHERA.—No.

Mr. FISH was glad to hear the honourable gentleman declare that his susceptibilities were not wounded. Then, it would not trouble the Minister of Education, when he retired to his rest, to feel that he had wounded the honourable gentleman's susceptibilities.

Mr. REEVES desired to say he had no wish to do so.

Mr. FISH was sure that the honourable gentleman frequently wished not to do so, but,

unfortunately, against his wish, he did do so. It must be a source of mutual gratification to the Minister and to the honourable member to know that the one had not done anything of the kind and that the other did not consider he had. The honourable gentleman had said if the Bill were carried it would, in all probability, render liable to fine or imprisonment trade combinations and trade-unions. He (Mr. Fish) was rather inclined to think it would, and that it would have a very disastrous effect upon any combinations which might be formed, and which, to his mind, would be perfectly legal; but the Minister of Education had gone on to say—he would not have noticed his remarks had it not been for what followed—that it was quite possible, if that were the effect of the Bill, it might cause the honourable member for Dunedin City to look upon it with some feeling of satisfaction. He took it that the honourable gentleman seemed to indicate that he (Mr. Fish) was opposed to trade-unions and to labour councils. He believed in trade-unions. They had had his favourable sympathy for many years. In point of fact, he might say that when the Minister of Education was in his political swaddling-clothes he (Mr. Fish) had given his support to the inauguration of trade-unions. And unions when they were formed for the protection of trade interests were admirable institutions, but they ceased to be that when used by political wire-pullers for the purpose of interfering with the politics of the day in a manner which was improper and detrimental to the body politic as a whole. Trade-unions and trade combinations had his approval so long as they were banded together to protect their rights, and to prevent improper usages with regard to sweating, and to maintain a fair standard of wages: then trade-unions had his most hearty support and sympathy. The honourable member for Manukau upon that occasion, as upon frequent other occasions, made an extremely sensible speech. He also expressed his views, as he usually did, in an exceedingly humorous way. He hardly knew how to characterize the peculiar contentions of the honourable member for Manukau. They were varied and extraordinary. At the same time, they always seemed to culminate in the same happy point. But the honourable member sometimes displayed an extra amount of common-sense. That accounted for the effect his speeches had upon his hearers. The honourable gentleman said, and very truthfully, that the preamble to the Bill did not mean what the honourable the mover himself thought it did. He thought that the honourable member for Manukau, in that respect, was entirely right. He thought his legal training, combined with his political knowledge, enabled him to form an opinion upon a matter of the kind, and it would have far greater weight with him (Mr. Fish) than would the opinion of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Shera) as evidenced by this Bill. He did not think there could be any doubt about it that, under the Bill, the Railway Commissioners and the

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Telegraph and Telephone Departments would be combinations in restraint of trade and commerce, because, with regard to all those institutions, the Government stopped other people from coming into the market and competing with them. He used this for the sake of argument. It was possible, if the Government were to allow another telephone system, they might have a reduction in the charges to some extent; and the same might apply to the postal and telegraph system of the colony. All these departments might be run more cheaply than at present. But at present the Government came in; and, under the honourable gentleman's Bill, if it meant anything at all, they would be unable to exist. He was quite sure that the honourable gentleman did not intend that, but that his idea was simply to restrain large and wealthy capitalists who sought gain to the injury and detriment of the body politic. He would maintain, with every respect, that nothing in the circumstances of the colony at the present time justified them in saying that there was any need, in that respect, for special legislation of that kind. Then, the Bill did not itself, without the aid of oral explanation, sufficiently explain the various terms the honourable gentleman used in it. Take, for example, the preamble. It said,—

"Whereas it is desirable to prevent, and declare unlawful, all combinations in restraint of trade and commerce, save and except such combinations as may from time to time be authorised under any enactment having for its object the adjustment of labour disputes and the settlement of differences between employers and employed."

What did the honourable member mean by "trade and commerce"? How far did it go? Where was it to go? where to end? As he had said just before, some combinations would be absolutely good for the people. There were other combinations which were bad and improper, but there was no definition of a combination in the Bill that was sufficiently clear to justify them in passing a Bill containing those clauses. Suppose such a thing as this: If, by undue influences, the price of a staple article of trade had been reduced to such a rate that it would not pay either the producer, the seller, or any one else: Did his honourable friend mean to render illegal any combination entered into for the purpose of raising the price of that article to such a sum as would pay the producer, and so enable him to pay those who were assisting him to produce the article? Surely that should not be allowed to become law. It appeared the scope of the honourable gentleman's Bill was in the direction he had indicated. Now, clause 2 read as follows: "From and after the coming into operation of this Act every contract or combination, in any form whatever, or conspiracy in restraint of trade or commerce," *et cetera*. What did the honourable gentleman mean by "conspiracy" in restraint of trade or commerce? What was the meaning of a clause attaching the same value to every "contract or combination" as to "conspiracy"? He was not

lawyer enough to properly estimate the difference, but it appeared to him that conspiracy was one thing and monopoly or restraint of trade another. There could be no doubt about that. However, there might be some legal gentleman in the House who could properly define them. That might perhaps be done in Committee if the Bill ever got that far. Then, again, with regard to conspiracy. If he mistook not, there was already a law in existence which was quite able to deal with anything in the shape of conspiracy; and, if that were so, the importation of those words into the clause was simply superfluous. Then, again, the penalties in that clause were very drastic. Any person engaged in such combination would be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, "and on conviction thereof shall be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to a fine not exceeding five hundred pounds, and at the like discretion to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year, with or without hard labour." The honourable gentleman could never have considered the nature of these penalties when he framed the Bill. In point of fact, it seemed to him that the honourable gentleman did not frame it, but that it was framed by somebody else, who failed to explain to the honourable gentleman really what the Bill meant, and what it would do if passed into law. Clause 3 was even worse than he had indicated. It provided,—

"From and after the coming into operation of this Act every person who shall monopolize, or attempt to monopolize, or combine or conspire with any other person or persons to monopolize, any part of the trade or commerce of the Colony of New Zealand, or of the trade or commerce of the said colony with parts beyond sea, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and shall, on conviction thereof, be liable, at the discretion of the Court, to a fine not exceeding five hundred pounds, and at the like discretion to be imprisoned for a term not exceeding one year, with or without hard labour."

That would altogether restrict trade, and would injure the position of people engaged in perfectly lawful pursuits. It was interfering with the rights and liberties of the subject. It would cause these people, under certain circumstances, to be fined and imprisoned to an extraordinary degree. Then, again, clause 6 was more outrageous still. It said,—

"Any property owned under any contract—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was not entitled to go through the Bill clause by clause. He could of course refer to the main features of the Bill.

Mr. FISH said he was surely entitled to read a clause of the Bill, and then expatiate upon it.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could do so, but he could not go through the Bill *seriatim*, clause by clause, and speak upon each clause in turn.

Mr. FISH said the last clause he had touched on was clause 6, so that that still left four clauses untouched; and that was quite sufficient to show that he was within his rights.

However, he was much obliged to Mr. Speaker for his ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not speak in that way to the Chair. He would repeat that the honourable gentleman must not go through the Bill clause by clause upon the motion for the second reading.

Mr. FISH said, if he broke the rules of the House, then it would be the duty of Mr. Speaker to reprove him for it; but he did not think Mr. Speaker had any right—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not argue with the Chair.

Mr. FISH said he presumed he had his rights in that House. Clause 6 said,—

"Any property owned under any contract, or by any combination, or pursuant to any conspiracy mentioned in the second section of this Act (and being the subject thereof), and being in the course of transportation from one part of the Colony of New Zealand to another, or to parts beyond sea, shall be forfeited to Her Majesty."

That was part of the clause. Now, in addition to the penalty of a fine and imprisonment, that clause provided for the forfeiture of goods when proceeding from the colony by sea, or coming to any port. Then, he said the clause was ridiculous. It was positively an insult to the House that such a Bill should be presented to it. He could not point out to the House the effect of the Bill unless he was allowed to read clauses such as that. He ventured to say that there were not a dozen members in the Chamber at that time who had read the Bill at all. It therefore became an absolute necessity for any member, in exercising his rights in that House, to read the clauses of the Bill, in order to emphasize and prove his remarks, so that his remarks might not appear in *Hansard* as mere empty talk, as the speeches of so many honourable members did. His honourable friend the member for Inangahua laughed the vacant laugh they were so used to: they had heard it so many times. It was a pity the honourable gentleman did not get rid of it. Clause 7 was even still more ridiculous than clause 6. To his mind, it would encourage costly litigation without any result adequate to the cost of such litigation. The penalty in clause 8 was three times the amount of the value of the goods. He was afraid to read the clause, on which he had notes, as he might be breaking the rules of the House. Clause 9 gave a definition of "combinations." He could only say that that definition was of a very searching and far-reaching character: it was altogether too drastic. It might be said, of course, that in discussing that Bill seriously he was wasting the time of the House, because there was not the remotest chance of the Bill passing; but he said that if a Bill was placed on the Order Paper every member of the House had a right to criticize it, and to do so to the best of his ability, and he did not think he should be prevented from making any remarks he felt fit to make, or be open to reproof for so doing. He would say that in that clause there was not the slightest

definition of "conspiracy" at all. They were left entirely in the dark as to what it meant. Whether the honourable gentleman considered it was sufficiently defined in the law of the colony he did not know. No doubt the word would have been defined if the honourable gentleman had the slightest hope that the Bill would become law. He thought the Bill was really an outrage upon the common-sense of the community, and one that should not have been introduced in that House by any honourable member. If it were necessary to bring in a measure of this sort, it was the duty of the Government to introduce it, and the honourable gentleman was only wasting time on that occasion, as he had done on former occasions, by bringing in Bills which he knew had not the slightest chance of being carried. He would move, That the Bill be read a second time that day three months.

Sir R. STOUT wished to say a few words in reference to what he would call the shameful waste of time they had just seen in the House. The honourable member was afraid that the Licensing Bill would come on that night, and he had deliberately spoken against time for an hour.

Mr FISH rose to a point of order. Was the honourable gentleman in order in saying that he had been speaking against time, and because he was afraid of another Bill coming on?

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was not entitled to attribute ulterior motives.

Sir R. STOUT said the honourable gentleman had expressed himself in a similar direction, and he (Sir R. Stout) asked if he would be right in repeating what the honourable gentleman said. The honourable gentleman had said the same thing, he believed, in the House. At any rate, the position was this: The Licensing Bill stood on the Order Paper, and what was the motive the honourable gentleman had he would leave to members to think over and determine for themselves. This he did say: that there had never been a more shameful waste of time than what the House had seen that night.

Mr. FISH again rose to a point of order. Was the honourable gentleman in order in using the words "shameful waste of time"?

Mr. SPEAKER thought the honourable gentleman was entitled to say that there had been a waste of time from his point of view. The honourable gentleman might express his own opinion, although that opinion might not be the opinion held by other honourable members.

Sir R. STOUT said the words "shameful waste of time" were words which the honourable member for Dunedin City himself made use of in reference to the Bill introduced by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Shera). He thought he might be allowed to say that the speech they had just listened to was an insult to the House, and was not consonant with the dignity of the House. He thought it was a great pity that the rules of the House were

not such as to prevent speeches of that kind being recorded in *Hansard*. The honourable gentleman almost every time he spoke brought up these co-operative contracts. He thought they had heard enough about these co-operative works; they were being brought into everything. They had already heard about those painting-works in the City of Wellington. He did not know whether there were any co-operative painting contracts in Dunedin. He did not know that there was much use in bringing it up, because the House knew that the question was not of much consequence. He was only glad that the honourable gentleman had got a little irritated, because it showed that the truth sometimes did some good, by bringing matters to light. Perhaps the House would now hear no more about these co-operative contracts; for, if it did, probably more would be heard about the co-operative work in Dunedin, and as to who found the plant and who did the job, for it was perfectly well known in Dunedin that there were such things as dummy painting contracts carried on there. Now, the position was this: that the time of the House was being wasted that evening, and, though he was not at liberty to say that it was in consequence of a certain Bill being on the Order Paper, still he could say that he was not going on with that Bill in Committee that night, and therefore if other honourable members were desirous of following the champion obstructor they should do so for some other reason. He was willing that his Bill should be postponed, so that the Government Bill might be discussed.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said, as the honourable member for Inangahua had intimated that he was not going on with his Bill, he could not be open to the charge of wanting to take up time if he discussed the Bill now before them. He would like to say a word or two with regard to the class of Bills introduced by the honourable member for Auckland City. He considered that a Bill of this sort indicated a class of mind that was not often seen in the House; and he certainly could not congratulate the people of Auckland on returning an honourable gentleman to the House whose ability could not suggest to him something better than this Restraint of Monopolies Bill. They knew that the honourable gentleman had powers of ambition which made him believe that his abilities were second only to those of the Premier. They knew that for a number of weeks the honourable gentleman had been angling for a position on the Government benches, which the Government did not see their way to give him: indeed, they did not wish to make the Government a laughing-stock. The House knew that it was in order to make himself conspicuous in the country that the honourable gentleman had introduced one of the most absurd measures that the House had ever been called upon to consider. They had seen the honourable gentleman with a pile of authorities before him to support the principles of this measure, but no sooner did the honourable gentleman rise to his feet than he dis-

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covered that not a single one of those authorities supported him in the ridiculous principles he enunciated. As had been pointed out by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), this Bill would practically restrict almost every industry in the colony. It would restrict, for instance, farmers from combining to oppose a "ring" that might be formed to reduce the price of grain. It would restrain the cheese-factories in the agricultural districts from combining to secure a fair price for their butter and cheese. Could absurdity go further? Such a measure as this could only be treated as a huge joke. It had been said the other day, in comparing the honourable gentleman with the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor), that, on the one hand, when the honourable member for Christchurch City secured a laugh in the House it was because he said something witty, but when the honourable member for Auckland City secured a laugh it was because they laughed at the honourable member himself. This was the difference between the honourable member for Christchurch City and the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill: In one case the House laughed at the honourable gentleman's joke, and in the other it laughed at the honourable gentleman himself. Let honourable members look at clause 7 of the Bill and see what it provided. It provided that any person who was injured in his business or property by any other person or corporation should be able to recover threefold the damage he had sustained. What did that mean? It meant that if a number of shopkeepers in a town felt aggrieved because some workers formed a co-operative association, and their business was injured by that association, they would have a cause of action against that association. It meant, further, that if a farmers' co-operative association, such as that which existed in Christchurch, should be found to interfere with some other occupation, the persons engaged in that occupation, who might previously have been making large profits, would have a cause of action against the farmers' association. He thought that if such a Bill became law it would practically paralyse all industry. It was the introduction of such measures as this that caused so much paralysis in the industrial enterprise of the colony; and he ventured to say that if the people of Auckland had any sense at all they would not again send back to the House an honourable gentleman who could propose such an absurd measure. The honourable gentleman said that the Bill was meant to restrict monopolies, but he (Mr. Mackenzie) thought the House would have to consider whether it should not pass a measure to restrict buffoonery. Then, what were the penalties? Why, for an infringement of any of the conditions of this marvellous production it was suggested that a person should be liable to a fine of £500, and to be imprisoned for one year. This Bill was just a parallel to a Bill which the honourable gentleman introduced last session with regard to inebriates, and he only regretted that the honourable gentleman had not been

placed in an institution of the character provided for in that Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must withdraw that expression.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said he ought, perhaps, to apologize for the expression, because one did not like to express one's real opinion of an honourable gentleman in that—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must withdraw the expression. A withdrawal when made should be complete and without reservation. He always expected, when an honourable gentleman had used words in the heat of debate that ought not to be used, that he should withdraw what he had said in a generous way.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked what expression Mr. Speaker wished him to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER said the expression of regret that the honourable member for Auckland City had not been placed in an inebriate asylum.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE would have much pleasure in withdrawing that expression. He next came to clause 9, defining what "combinations" were. They were combinations of persons, or of corporations, or partly of persons and partly of corporations, the object of which was to raise the price or restrict the production or output of any mineral, commodity, product, and so on. Under the provisions of that clause mining companies could not regulate the output of their coal. If this Bill were to become law it would not be within the scope of any company to say to what extent a manufacture should be carried on. The whole trade and commerce of the country would be interfered with, and, as a result, numbers of men would be thrown out of employment. He thought the time of the House had been largely wasted in the discussion of this Bill. It was not his intention to delay time further; but he thought the introduction of a measure of this sort ought to be an indication to the Government that they should sweep away private members' days altogether, and get through some practical legislation, and let honourable members get away to their homes.

Mr. SHERA regretted exceedingly that the last speaker seemed to have been offended with him. The speech of the honourable gentleman had been of a most personally offensive character, and he regretted that the honourable gentleman should have offended against the good taste of many members of the House who wished to maintain a high tone in their debates. It was true that some time ago he (Mr. SHERA) had referred to the honourable gentleman. He had served up to the House what might be called a salad, and was afraid that he had put a little too much mustard in it and that it had blistered the honourable gentleman, who was evidently still sore and smarting from it. As to the honourable gentleman's comments on this Bill, which was considered one of the most important on the statute-book of the American Republic, he would offer no remarks upon them. The honourable gentleman spoke of the Bill as a great absurdity; but it was a measure which restricted "rings"

and "corners," and protected the masses of the people against the improper use of wealth—wealth that might be used to reduce the price of grain to the farmers. Combinations might exist to agree to pay the farmers only a certain price, and this Bill would prevent their doing so. That was all he was going to say with regard to the honourable gentleman. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) seemed to him to have an ambition—an ambition which was somewhat different from that of other honourable gentlemen. To his mind the honourable gentleman aspired to be the currycomb of the House, and to groom down other honourable members. The honourable gentleman had attempted that evening to groom him down; but, to use an expression which the honourable gentleman had often repeated in the House, he would say to him in his own words, "Could the force of folly further go?" The penalties in this Bill, which had been referred to, were no doubt severe; but it was the law in America—not merely in some State, but it was the law of the whole Republic. He had omitted, in moving the second reading, to give the title of the United States Act. It was, "An Act to protect Trade and Commerce against Unlawful Restraints and Monopolies." The honourable member for Manukau had indulged in some levity, but he did not think levity became that honourable gentleman, and he was of the opinion that his critique on the Bill would not add to his reputation for forensic skill. The Minister of Labour seemed to have been reading American history instead of the Bill, for it was quite true that the law as passed in America had the effect pointed out by the honourable gentleman, but this Bill had been prepared with care to protect trade combinations in this country—that was, if they took advantage of his Bill to be registered under it. He would point out to the House that this Bill should be read in connection with the Conciliation Bill of the Minister, now before the House. He did not think it was necessary to say anything further, except that he was sorry that the honourable gentlemen who had commented on it had only given it a superficial reading. Its effect was far-reaching; its necessity was not immediate in this colony, he was glad to say; but, at the same time, he had no doubt that the day would come when this Bill or something like it would become the law of the land.

The House divided on the question, "That the word 'now,' proposed to be omitted, stand part of the question."

AYES, 17.

Earnshaw	Joyce	Palmer
Fraser	Kapa	Smith, W. C.
Hall-Jones	Kelly, W.	Swan.
Harkness	Mackintosh	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	McGuire	Shera
Houston	Meredith	Thompson, R.

NOES, 34.

Buchanan	Dawson	Fish
Buick	Fergus	Fisher

Mr. Shera

Hall	Moore	Taipua
Hamlin	Parata	Tanner
Kelly, J.	Pinkerton	Taylor
Lake	Reeves	Thompson, T.
Lawry	Rhodes	Ward
Mackenzie, T.	Richardson	Wright.
McGowan	Russell	
McKenzie, J.	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
McLean	Saunders	Blake
Mills, C. H.	Smith, E. M.	Buckland.

Majority against, 17.

Motion negatived, and amendment agreed to.

GUM AND GUMFIELDS BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Captain RUSSELL was not in the House when the Bill was originally moved by the honourable gentleman, but it was with extreme regret he had read the Bill. It seemed to him a very dangerous Bill, and one that established an exceedingly bad precedent. He believed the honourable gentleman who moved it boasted proudly that he was a young New-Zealander; he hoped this was not a sample of the spirit which imbued young New-Zealanders. They were accustomed to think that the youth of this country were in no way inferior to the race from which they sprang—the English people. This Bill, if anything, meant that the English people, of whom they were proud to be a part, were in some way or other inferior to those persons who came to the colony from other parts of Europe anxious to become true New-Zealanders. They were told by the Bill that distinctions of race should be made—that New Zealand was to be reserved, not merely only for the English-speaking people, but for those from England alone, or, at any rate, from the United Kingdom alone. Some of the noblest families in the Old Country were proud to boast themselves of Norman blood, and many influential families came to England at the same time as the Prince of Orange, and were of Dutch blood; but a Bill like this prevented men from coming from any other country and settling in New Zealand—if the Bill was to be as wide in its effects as he believed it would be. The Bill went on to provide that no man should be allowed to dig for gum in New Zealand until he has been here twelve months. Was that a right and proper thing, when they saw men walking about New Zealand and clamouring for work, that restrictions should be put on those who wanted to earn an honest livelihood? Was it desirable that they should draw a distinction between men who came from one country and men who came from another? Were they to say they were unable to compete with men from any part of Europe? Heaven forbid that such should ever be the case! All the world over it was the boast of Englishmen that they were able to compete with any race at any work, whatever it might be. And yet they were told by this Bill that they were not fit to compete with a foreigner! What was the British race? Were they not a race composed of a mixture from every nationality of Europe? And was it not their custom to say that the

English people had been benefited materially by the mixture of blood which had come into England from other countries of Europe? Was it a fact that the people against whom this Bill was more particularly aimed had done anything but credit to the country they came from, or to the colony to which they now belonged? They had considerable numbers of Danes, Scandinavians, and other nationalities on the eastern coast of this North Island. He had never heard that these men were less prudent, less industrious, less sober, or less well-deserving citizens than any other people in this colony. Yet the colony was led to suppose that the people against whom this Bill was aimed were so undesirable a class of people that they should be prevented from coming to the colony and competing with New-Zealanders. He was surprised that such a Bill could be introduced. He had no doubt the honourable gentleman who introduced it had done so after great reflection, because it would not be reasonable to suppose that any man would introduce it with a view of wasting time. Were it not that he believed no honourable member would introduce a Bill of this kind for the mere purpose of wasting the time of the House, he would have supposed that was its object. The Bill seemed to him to say that no man should labour in a particular portion of the colony until he had been resident there for twelve months; that then he should not be able to labour unless he paid a fee of 1s. for the privilege of doing so, and if he was a foreigner he was compelled to pay £5. The whole Bill appeared to him to be a sorry joke. English-speaking people were the greatest emigrating people in the world—a people who had gone to all parts of the world, to all the countries of Europe, to America, to the River Plate, and to the Brazils, Africa, and India. Supposing an embargo were placed upon our own people, and they were not allowed to land or work in a foreign country unless they first of all paid a tax for the privilege of doing so, would the honourable gentleman who introduced this Bill think that right and proper? And yet that was exactly on the lines of this Bill. Now, he wondered if the honourable gentleman remembered thirty years ago—he could see he could not remember very much of what occurred thirty years ago; but, notwithstanding that, he might have read a poem by Alfred Tennyson written when the Princess Alexandra came over to England to marry the Prince of Wales, and how he concluded something like this:—

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee,
Alexandra.

In these words the Poet Laureate expressed in felicitous phrase that the English people were composed of all the nations of Europe. They had great cause to be proud of it, and he believed New Zealand would yet be proud of the Teutons and Danes who had come to help create the colony. He would oppose the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR said that some few months

ago this very question was brought under his notice by the arrival of these people at Auckland. He understood then that some people in the colony were making contracts outside the colony for the employment of these Austrians, or Danes, or whatever they might be. He thought the honourable gentleman who had just sat down would, at any rate, object to that kind of thing—to people entering into contracts in New South Wales, or anywhere else, in order to introduce cheap labour into the colony. Any man coming to this colony voluntarily outside of a contract of that kind had a right to earn his living; but what he objected to was this, and the object of the Bill was to prevent people elsewhere from entering into contracts outside the colony with, perhaps, men who did not understand the language, and bringing them down to the gumfields, and thereby not only lowering the earnings of the working-men but doing an injury to the colony at large. He should be exceedingly sorry that a colony like this should not be open to any man, no matter what country he belonged to; but what he did object most strongly to was contracts being entered into by people in this colony with people outside the colony, binding them to work at a certain rate, and to sell their gum to these persons, as they should be directed to do by the owners of these gumfields. To his mind it was a very desirable thing to prevent these outside contracts, because they all knew it meant ruining the people of the colony. At the same time, it should be understood that any man coming into the colony individually had a perfect right to earn his living, whether he was a Dutchman or a Hottentot. But these contracts, made to bring a number of people here to work for a certain amount of pay, and pledging them to sell gum to those who imported them, would be a curse to the colony, and he trusted honourable members would deal with the question from that point of view.

Mr. BUCKLAND felt they were taken at a considerable disadvantage in not having got the report of the Gumfields Commission before them. He did not see how they could very well go on with the discussion. He understood from what he saw in the newspapers on that report that it would not pay to collect the ten-shilling tax on the gumfields, and, if that did not pay, he did not see how a tax of one shilling was going to succeed. If it was necessary to put a tax on gumdiggers, he thought it should be a uniform one all round. He was not going to argue the question now whether such a tax should be put on at all, but he thought it was a wrong thing to have such a difference in the amount of the tax. If a person had been in the colony fifteen months, and got naturalised, he could get a shilling license; but if he had just come into the colony he had to pay £5. That was a thing which was wrong in principle, and therefore the House ought never to pass it. If they were to tax the gumdiggers the proposal ought to be brought down by the Government. He objected strongly to the Bill which the honour-

able member for Waitemata had introduced, and would therefore move, That the Bill be read a second time that day three months.

Mr. R. THOMPSON did not intend to say anything on this Bill that evening, for the simple reason that he thought it would have been much better if this discussion stood over until the report of the Gumfields Commission was before the House; but, as it was quite possible the Bill might now be shelved altogether, he would merely like to say—as a member representing the people in that part of the colony—that when any attempt was made to place a tax upon those working-men in that part of the colony who were earning their living by gumdigging he would oppose it to the utmost of his power. There was no class of working-men more deserving of the sympathy of the House than the gumdiggers were. There was no class of working-men who had received so little consideration from the Government as those men, and, he ventured to say, there were no class who were more respectable, who were better conducted, or who gave the authorities less trouble than those working on the gumfields. Although there were seven or eight thousand men there, a police case was rarely heard of. No one heard of their committing crimes. In the districts in the North where they were employed the settlers had no necessity even to turn the key in their doors. The district was absolutely free from crime of every kind, and a more respectable class of working-men were not to be found in any country. Therefore, if any attempt was made to place taxation on the shoulders of these men, he should certainly do whatever he could to prevent it.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would suggest that they should postpone the discussion of this Bill until such time as the report of the Commission was before the House. He moved the adjournment the other night with that object. He thought that would be better than to come to a vote now on the question that the Bill be read a second time that day three months.

Mr. REEVES moved the adjournment of the debate, on the ground that the report of the Commission, which he felt sure would contain a great deal of information on this subject, was not yet before the House. It might be expected to be before the House almost immediately. He thought honourable gentlemen would admit they would be in a much better position to deal with the question when that report came down. He would not waste time by introducing any further argument, because he thought that argument sufficient.

Mr. BRUCE wished to ask Mr. Speaker's ruling on a point of order. Supposing, for argument's sake, that a Minister or any member of the House moved the adjournment of the debate, did that preclude any member of the House from speaking to anything but the adjournment?

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes, at present.

Mr. BRUCE would bow to Mr. Speaker's ruling, but at the same time just wished to say this: that after any honourable member intro-

duced a measure another honourable member might move the adjournment of the debate, and thus practically preclude discussion on the measure.

Mr. SPEAKER said, only for the time. After the adjournment of the debate was carried the House fixed a time for the resumption of the debate, and the debate would be resumed at the time fixed.

Mr. BRUCE said, then, of course, it was within the discretion of the House practically to burke discussion, or to have the question put off to a future time.

Mr. W. KELLY would ask the honourable gentleman to accept the suggestion of the Minister. He was not satisfied with the Bill, and did not think he could even vote for the second reading. Clause 2 provided—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was discussing the Bill itself.

Mr. W. KELLY hoped the honourable gentleman would accept the suggestion of the Minister to adjourn the debate.

Captain RUSSELL said he could give a reason why the debate should not be adjourned, and that was that, whatever the report of the Commission on the Gumfields might be, it did not in any way affect their proceedings with regard to this Bill. The Commission might make recommendations as to the working of the gumfields, but this was simply a Bill to tax a certain class of the population. There was really nothing in connection with the regulation of the gumfields in this Bill. The question they had to decide was, whether people should not be allowed to work on the gumfields until they had been twelve months in the colony, and whether one class should pay a fee of 1s. and another £5. They could negative that Bill and then consider the report of the Gumfields Commission subsequently, if necessary.

Mr. BRUCE had intended taking up the very same line of argument as the honourable gentleman who had just spoken. It was not a question which ought to rule the deliberations and consideration of the House that a report in regard to the gumfields might come before the House very shortly. The question was really this: whether the House was prepared to allow, or not to allow, men who came from other countries to work upon the gumfields. That was in reality the crux of the question.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could only give reasons why the debate should or should not be adjourned.

Mr. BRUCE said he was endeavouring to do that. This was a question of principle. The honourable member for Marsden had told the House that the gumdiggers had received less consideration than any other people in the colony. In what sense had they received less consideration?

Mr. SPEAKER would remind the honourable gentleman that he must confine himself to the question of adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BRUCE might point out that the honourable gentleman had stated that a number of people in these northern districts did not find it necessary to lock their doors. He

believed the reason for that was that there was nothing to steal there. But, all joking apart, the question really involved here was this: Were they to allow people from other countries to come and work in the colony?

Mr. SPEAKER could not allow the honourable gentleman to discuss the merits of the Bill. He must confine himself to the question of the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BRUCE was endeavouring to give reasons why the debate should not be adjourned. One reason was this: that this was largely a question of principle, and that the House ought to determine that principle at once. There was no reason why the debate should be adjourned. He did not wish to go beyond Mr. Speaker's ruling, but he wanted to point out that this Bill was a blow aimed at these people called Austrians, who had come to New Zealand in consequence of—

Mr. SPEAKER was very sorry to interrupt the honourable gentleman again, but he must rule him out of order.

Mr. BRUCE said, with all due respect to Mr. Speaker's ruling, he could not understand why he was ruled out of order. He wished to show that there was a principle involved in the Bill, that of race disabilities. He did not wish the debate adjourned, because it was a question of principle, and nothing had been shown why the debate should be adjourned by the honourable gentleman who moved the adjournment; and he thought they ought really to decide the question that night as to whether these Austrians or any one who came to the colony should or should not be allowed to dig gum. That was really the question involved.

Mr. HOUSTON had much pleasure in supporting the motion for the adjournment, for the reason that he understood the report of the Gumfields Commission would be ready in a few days. That Commission was appointed to inquire into this very question of the influx of the Austrians, and he understood that the report contained very valuable suggestions as to the licensing of gumdiggers. Honourable members would be in a much better position to discuss the merits of this Bill after they had the report placed before them. The European gumdiggers occupied a very large portion of his electorate, and he would not be a party to do anything that would tend in any way to inflict an injury upon these men. They worked hard, and very long hours indeed, not only through the day but during the night. He knew several of those men who worked perhaps fourteen or fifteen hours a day, and worked very hard; and he would do all in his power to assist these men, who were endeavouring to earn an honest living.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was now speaking to the merits of the Bill.

Mr. HOUSTON said he was endeavouring to show why they should postpone the consideration of the measure. He thought they should consider the Bill in the light of the suggestions made in the report to be furnished by the Commissioners. He knew that report contained very

valuable suggestions, and honourable members would be in a better position, and especially those who did not understand anything about the working of the gumfields, to give this Bill fair consideration. He had great pleasure in supporting the motion for adjournment.

Mr. FISH would oppose the motion for adjournment, simply because the principle of the Bill was of such a pernicious character as to lead him to suppose they would gain nothing whatever by the adjournment of the debate. It would be much better to settle the question at once by rejecting the Bill altogether. He could not conceive it possible under any circumstances that the House should pass the Bill; and, if that was so, he did not think the report of the Commission would make any possible difference with regard to the measure.

Mr. SEDDON trusted the House would agree to the adjournment of the debate. He would suggest that they should agree to the adjournment, because it might be necessary for the Government to introduce a Bill dealing with this question this session. If they negatived the Bill, as suggested by the honourable member for Dunedin City, or carried the motion that had been made that the Bill be read a second time that day three months, it might hamper the Government and the House in dealing with this question later on. He thought this was a very good reason why they should adjourn the debate, and not negative the second reading.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said he was of the same opinion as the honourable member for Rangitikei. That honourable gentleman appeared to him to have put the question very concisely. He would vote against the adjournment of the debate, for this reason: They should, if possible, get a decision at once upon the question whether or not the country was going to pass special legislation against a certain body of Europeans. If the adjournment were carried,—which he supposed would be the case,—the feeling would go abroad, not only in this colony but in other parts of the world, that it was the intention of the House to insist upon special restrictions.

Mr. PALMER rose to a point of order. The honourable member was discussing the merits of the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had already ruled that previous speakers must confine themselves to giving reasons for or against the adjournment.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE simply wished a decision to be come to as to whether they should or should not pass certain restrictions against certain Europeans coming to this country; and if the adjournment were carried it would shelve the measure, and the opinion might go abroad which he had stated. Therefore he would vote against the adjournment, in order that the House might give its decision upon the main issue of the Bill.

Sir J. HALL said the Premier had given reasons for the adjournment which would induce him to vote against it. The honourable gentleman said if the adjournment was not carried it might have the effect of prevent-

ing the Government from introducing another Bill dealing with this question. Considering the number of Bills which had already been showered upon them, anything would be a blessing that would prevent the Government from introducing more Bills. Therefore he would vote against the adjournment.

Mr. PALMER said that, after what had fallen from the lips of the Premier—namely, that a vote upon this Bill might militate against the Government introducing any such measure as this—and as he (Mr. Palmer) apprehended, and felt certain in fact, that something would have to be done, he did not want to prejudice the class of people whom this Bill was brought in to assist, and therefore he was happy and willing to accept the suggestion of the Premier. Under these circumstances he would vote for the adjournment. He might say that an attempt was being made to force on a vote, not on the adjournment of the debate, but on the Bill itself.

Mr. RHODES said the only reason given for the adjournment was that given by the Premier—namely, that he might wish to bring in some provisions of this Bill hereafter. He thought it was only waste of time to do that. There were only two provisions in the Bill, and he thought the House should at once decide upon them.

Mr. PALMER rose to a point of order. The honourable member was discussing the merits of the Bill.

Mr. RHODES said he was only stating facts, and not discussing the merits. There were only two provisions of the Bill they could vote on. One was that no person should have the right to dig gum without a license, and the other was one giving power to impose an extra licensing-fee upon certain classes of the community. The House, he thought, would be quite prepared to vote on these questions without any further consideration or discussion.

The House divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 41.

Buckland	Kapa	Seddon
Buick	Kelly, J.	Shera
Cadman	Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	Lawry	Smith, W. O.
Dawson	Mackintosh	Stout
Duncan	McGowan	Taipua
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Fraser	McLean	Taylor
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Hamlin	Palmer	Thompson, T.
Hogg	Parata	Ward.
Houston	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	Mills, C. H.
Joyce	Saunders	Pinkerton.

NOES, 14.

Bruce	Lake	Swan
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Wright.
Fergus	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Richardson	Earnshaw
Hall	Russell	Mackenzie, T.

Majority for, 27.

Motion agreed to, and debate adjourned.

Sir J. Hall

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That this House do now adjourn.

Sir R. STOUT suggested that the next two orders of the day should be called on, as it was the desire of those who were in charge of these Bills to have them postponed—not to go on with them. If the honourable member would withdraw his motion until those orders were postponed no harm would be done.

Mr. FISH did not see that any exception should be made with regard to any Bill on the Order Paper which happened to be in charge of the honourable gentleman. The honourable gentleman should not receive any exceptional treatment from the House, and he thought he should take the same chance and the same risk with his Bill as other honourable gentlemen had to do with theirs. If exceptional favour was to be shown in this manner to the honourable gentleman he did not think it would be fair. If they did it in one case they would have to do it in all.

Mr. SPEAKER said the motion for adjournment could not be withdrawn except by the unanimous consent of the House. It could, of course, be negatived.

Mr. SHERA rose to a point of order. Should not the order of the day have been called on before the motion for the adjournment?

Mr. SPEAKER said, No. The honourable gentleman would see that there were sixty orders of the day, and if what he suggested were the case it would be necessary to call them all on before the House could adjourn.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE might point out to the House that the honourable member for Inangahua was not taking an exceptional course at all, and it was extremely unusual to object to the opportunity being afforded an honourable member to obtain the postponement of an order of the day of which he was specially in charge. He did not think he had ever known it to be objected to before. It gave no exceptional favour whatever to the honourable member.

Sir J. HALL said if any exception was being made it was rather against than in favour of the honourable member for Inangahua. An honourable member who had a Bill so high up on to-day's Order Paper as he had, had a right to expect that in the ordinary course he would have the opportunity of bringing it up for consideration. The Bill would, unless the sitting were cut short, have been come to, and the member in charge of it would have had an opportunity of going on with it or of postponing it. The present was an unusual course, and he did not think it was advisable to deprive the honourable gentleman of the opportunity that he was fairly entitled to.

Mr. SEDDON desired to point out to the House that the two Bills which were first on the Order Paper would come on in exactly the same position on the following Thursday night. The Bills set down for the following Thursday must properly take precedence, and then the two Bills referred to would be the two next to be taken.

Sir R. STOUT said he did not want the Bill to come on next Thursday.

Mr. FERGUS asked Mr. Speaker's ruling on the position.

Mr. SPEAKER said the question was the adjournment of the House, upon which question almost any subject might be debated.

Mr. FERGUS said the motion for adjournment had been moved by the Hon. the Premier; but, before that, the honourable member for Inangahua rose and asked the consent of the House that his Bill should be allowed to be put down first for Tuesday fortnight. He presumed the House could only confirm this by negating the motion for the adjournment of the House.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE rose to a point of order. The motion was not in the hands of the House.

Mr. SEDDON was quite willing to withdraw his motion if it would help the matter, and asked leave accordingly.

Leave to withdraw refused.

The House divided on the question, "That this House do now adjourn."

AYES, 37.

Blake	Kapa	Saunders
Bruce	Kelly, J.	Seddon
Buckland	Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.
Buick	Lawry	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	Mackintosh	Swan
Carroll	McGowan	Taylor
Dawson	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Fish	McLean	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Meredith	Ward.
Fraser	Pinkerton	
Houston	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Richardson	Hogg
Joyce	Sandford	Mills, C. H.

NOES, 16.

Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Duncan	O'Connor	Wright.
Hall	Parata	
Hall-Jones	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Russell	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, M.	Shera	Stout.

Majority for, 21.

Motion agreed to.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past ten o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 18th August, 1893.

First Reading—Railway Officers—Hicks Bay Telegraph—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Kaipoi Borough Council Vesting Bill.

RAILWAY OFFICERS.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, *That Return No. 108, laid on the table on the 16th August, 1893, relative to leave of absence of railway officers, be printed.* He moved this motion with a certain amount of hesitancy, for he recognised that the printing bill of the colony had assumed somewhat large proportions already; but the return was an important one to a great many people, inasmuch as it showed that there was a great deal of difference in the treatment meted out to the different employes on the railways. It would be found that officers of the Railway Department drawing salaries of from £800 to £1,000 a year were allowed leave of absence on full pay for three, six, and even twelve months at a time, while also drawing travelling-expenses; and they knew from experience that workmen on the railways were refused leave of absence for half a day, even so much as to go to a funeral. He did not know that the printing would cost a very great deal, and he hoped the Government would offer no objection to it.

Motion agreed to.

HICKS BAY TELEGRAPH.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE asked whether the Government would be disposed to consider the desirability of extending the telegraph or telephone to Hicks Bay.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said the cost of constructing the line to Hicks Bay was estimated at £1,850, besides which, linemen would have to be found at a cost of £150 per annum; to balance which, the receipts were only estimated at £20 per annum. Such being the case, the Government, he was sorry to say, did not see their way to put up the line.

ELECTORAL BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Sir, I trust the Council will pardon me if on this occasion the remarks which I am about to make on the second reading of this Bill are somewhat brief. It is very trying indeed to have to repeat a third time what has been said before,—for, practically, this measure has been before the Council on three occasions. On the first occasion on which I introduced this Bill, in 1891, I explained it as I understood it—not only to my own satisfaction, which would not go for much, but, I think, to the satisfaction of most honourable members, with the exception of my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds. On the second occasion, in 1892, when I again introduced this measure, I explained it to his entire approval. Therefore I do not think that much explanation is necessary on this occasion, nor, in fact, do I think any explanation is necessary in asking the Council to agree to the Bill being read a second time. It is quite true, Sir, there are in this Council many honourable members who were not here when the Bill was discussed before, and those honourable members might probably consider some explanation necessary. I understand that several honourable members are anxious to discuss the merits of this Bill and debate it fully, and I wish

to give them an opportunity of doing so. On the first occasion upon which I introduced the measure the Bill did not contain one of the principles which are at present in it—that is, freehold qualification. There are these two qualifications which were insisted on by this Council, sent to another place, and returned from that place in 1892—the qualification of residence and the property qualification. Soon after I introduced that Bill, in September, 1891, it was followed by another Bill, which might be called an element of discord, and that was the Woman's Franchise Bill. That Bill was introduced in a very able speech by an honourable member who is no longer here. I venture to say that on that occasion the speeches on the question were worthy of the Council and worthy of those who spoke. It will be in the recollection of honourable gentlemen that my honourable friend Mr. Bowen on that occasion made a speech, which I have over and over again read with pleasure. Many other honourable members also spoke; and I believe you yourself, Sir, as one of the members of this Council, addressed us impressively and in language not uncertain. On that occasion I had to explain to the Council the position in which I was placed. I said then, what I do not hesitate to say now—that, this being a Government measure, and the representatives of the people in another place having sent it to us in its present shape, I should be a very stubborn man to resist that opinion and prefer my own views to those of men who are more in touch with the people. I do not hesitate to say that I have not changed my views one iota, notwithstanding the fact that this is a measure which is called for by the people, and is considered to be a benefit to the community at large. Now, Sir, the Bill is practically a piece of machinery, the principles of which are very few, though large; and it has been so ably debated, on more than one occasion, that I think I should be trespassing upon the intelligence of honourable members were I to do anything more than simply move, *That the Bill be now read the second time*, reserving to myself the right to say what I might have to say in reply to those who may oppose the measure.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—With regard to the Bill itself there is not so much to be said, except this: that, in the evident desire there is for change, we are required to interfere very grossly with the liberties of the people. I think that the alteration proposed last year to extend the electoral privileges to shearers and harvesters was a step not only in the right direction, but in a direction by which we could make sure of obtaining the votes of some of the most valuable sections of our community. It is now proposed to drop the shearers and harvesters, and to put in another class—a class of town people who are not so much wanted to vote. The towns have already vastly too much influence in the country; and I think the commercial travellers are quite the last class which ought to be specially considered in a matter of this kind. They are an exceedingly small section, and there is nothing to

Hon. Sir P. A. Buckley

entitle them to receive this special advantage which is sought to be given them. I shall therefore, in Committee on the Bill, try to replace in the Bill the provision allowing shearers and harvesters to take out electoral rights, to whom this privilege was given last year. There is nothing I know of to be said against allowing shearers and harvesters to have the same privileges as seamen. Although the Premier, I saw in another place, said there was a certain amount of prejudice against extending the privilege to the class of people I have mentioned, I think, Sir, that the Bill would be just as likely to pass with that in it as it would without. Then, I am glad to see that the proposal made by the Premier for keeping back the ballot-papers at small places has been expunged from the Bill. It was quite unnecessary. It was only proposed, so far as I could see, for the purpose of keeping up the excitement as to the result of an election, and would have been of no earthly good. I do not think that the practice of counting up the votes on the same night at each polling-place will in any way affect the secrecy of the ballot, except where persons choose to go and talk about the way they have voted themselves. Those are the objections I had to the Bill itself; and on one of them I shall endeavour to amend the Bill, and the other I am very glad to see out of it altogether. We now come to the question of the woman's franchise. That question is one which has agitated us on more than one occasion; and I think I may say honestly it would have passed last year had it not been for the proposal to give women electoral rights. We thought the women of the country were under certain difficulties which women in the towns were not under, and that it would have been difficult to get any good out of women's suffrage unless we made sure beforehand of their being able to record their votes. Women have duties at home which would very often prevent them from going six or eight miles to vote in the country, and we thought it was only proper to give them the same right as it was proposed to extend to shearers, seamen, and harvesters. On that ground the other branch of the Legislature differed with us very materially. They would not look at it; and the consequence was, the Bill was lost. Even with that compromise I was not satisfied. I do not think there is any inherent right in women to vote. I consider that the proposal to allow them the electoral right means the rule of the clergy. That is what it means. Women are more impressionable than men, and they are more in the hands of the clergy. All the civilised world over, for a long time past, there has been a movement to exclude the clergy from active part in the government of a country, and, if that is restored by this woman's suffrage, it can only end in disaster. I am given to understand that a petition containing thirty thousand names of women—being one-seventh of the whole number of adult women of the country—has been sent to Parliament in favour of this Bill. Well, there are various ways of looking at that petition. One way, and not

the only way, is that the women of the country are perplexed and alarmed at the course of legislation that is going on, and that they have considerable distrust of their rulers: just as when a woman driving loses confidence in her charioteer, and clutches at the reins, so it is that the women of the towns are now making an endeavour to lay hold of the reins, and see if they cannot rule better than those who are driving. I look upon it that their petition shows a want of confidence in their rulers, and that is all. There are persons who tell us calmly that they are influenced in bringing this proposal by the great principle of justice to women. There is no more profound hypocrisy possible. When they seek to give women the franchise, and will not allow them the privilege of sitting in Parliament and exercising in an efficient manner a voice in the country, it is obvious to me that what they want is to use women to their own advantage, for they think the women's votes will help them to get into Parliament, and not that they will influence the legislation of the country. The pseudo-Conservatives we have in this country fully believe that women will exercise a conservative influence in the country, while the opposite party think they will have another influence. It is from the most purely selfish motives that the proposal is brought forward, and it is from no chivalrous, or courteous, or deferential feelings whatever. It must be borne in mind that, though there have been many reforms in many civilised countries, there never has been one adopted of so far-reaching a character as this. We are absolutely forcing this electoral power on the country without having made any appeal to the country whatever. We are asked, just on the eve of an election, to pass a Bill taking away from those who have a monopoly of the franchise that monopoly—which does seem to be a most monstrous thing. There may be people who conscientiously believe that it is really an act of justice to treat women in this way, but we cannot say whether the majority of men of this country do or do not hold that view. The fact of thirty thousand women, all drawn from the towns, probably the greater proportion of them from the Tailoresses' Unions and women of the working-class in the towns, with a few of the women's-rights women added, having signed a petition does not appear to me to be any proof at all that the women of the country want it. On the contrary I think the women who live "on their own hook," vulgarly speaking, are not the class of women who make up the majority of women in this colony, nor are they the class of women who are entitled to be heard on behalf of their sisters. The other six-sevenths, who are the mothers and daughters of those people who carry the whole country on their backs, are the people, surely, who have as much to say in the matter, and a great deal more, than the people who live in towns. I think this principle being introduced in this Electoral Bill is an exceedingly bad one. It ought to have been brought here on its own merits, and argued on its own merits, and not put into a

Bill like this, which cannot be laid aside without great inconvenience, otherwise I should like to see the Bill thrown out on its second reading. Of course we cannot but take into consideration all the other proposals in the Bill; and this principle in the Bill only tends to confuse the debate to a certain extent in its passage. Now, it is a curious thing that all the experiments in vogue of this kind of modern legislation seem to be tried in this unfortunate country. It is the country where the labouring-classes are the best off, and a country the population of which is so small as not even to afford an adequate example for any other countries; for what would answer in a country like this might not apply to larger ones. Their answer would be always ready, "What might suit your country will not apply to us." This experiment has been tried in various States of America. There is one now which is being constantly quoted—the State of Wyoming, where they have had woman's suffrage, which has been in existence there the last twenty-three years: after it had existed ten years both women and men petitioned their Congress to abolish it. After ten years we shall have more knowledge of its working here, and I think those who are now so anxious to promote it will then be just as anxious to do away with it. I do not think it will do any great harm myself, but I do not believe it will do any good. There is another question, while we are considering whether women ought really to have the right to exercise a voice in the government of the country, apart from the theory of justice to women. It is always a first step in the decadence of a nation when men hand over government to women, and I think the country must be said to be tottering to its fall when the women have too much power in their hands, because it means that the men have shirked their proper duty in any such country. The first step in the decadence of many countries has been due to the interference of women, and to their having too much voice in the government of the country. I also say that there are responsibilities in life, at least, devolving upon the men that do not devolve upon the women. For instance, one responsibility is the maintenance of the peace. How, I ask, can it be possible for the maintenance of the peace to be intrusted to a police force of women? The thing is monstrous. How could the commerce of the colony be carried on if women were called upon to be our sailors? I have not referred to the question of defence, because some people in this country always pooh-pooh any danger to the country; but, of course, that comes in also. We cannot intrust our defence to women unless our men are becoming emasculate and unable to bear their share. The equal rights of women extend only to their property, and it is just that they should have the vote in all local questions involving their properties as ratepayers. When it comes to the broader question of the government of the country, I do not agree with the extension of power to women. The views of those honourable gentlemen who are in favour

of introducing this novel system into our electorates are peculiar. The Conservatives, such as they are in other countries, are not such as they are in this country. In fact, this country is becoming rapidly divided into two classes—the “haves” and the “have-nots.” We know what the cherished traditions of the Conservative party, or some of them, are. I may take the wise words of the late Lord Beaconsfield. He says,—

“The ballot we oppose because we think the country does not wish it. But the first Parliament elected under the ballot will return a Tory majority. If the further step of manhood suffrage is taken there will rarely be a Liberal party in power again. But if the extreme step of female suffrage is granted there will never be a Liberal Government again, for every woman in England is a Conservative.”

That, perhaps, would not apply here if we had the woman's suffrage: we should have women absolutely without any stake whatever in the country, and the tendency would be, as far as I can judge, to Radicalism. Women, as a rule, will vote with their men, and if there is, as I have just said, a Radical majority in the country, I suppose there will be a still larger majority when the Radicals have their women to vote for them. As a rule, it will be found, on the other hand, that the country-women under this Bill will not be able to vote at all. The women in the country districts would exercise a little more Conservative influence; but the action last year in another place shows that they will not be allowed to vote in the only way possible for them—that is, by electoral rights; and I fear very much the proper balance of power will not be maintained unless electoral rights are given. There can be no question, Sir, about this: If it were possible to get the honest opinion of women on almost any law in existence, it would be exercised beneficially, and I think it would have a very good effect also in stopping this eternal desire for change. It would give us at least that one pleasure which we never get now; and I think it would be desirable from many points of view. It would have an influence in our elections that would tend towards improving people, and that influence would be found more largely among the women than among the men. But I should be very loth to see the women drawn into the horrible turmoil of disputed elections. I do not for one moment believe we should bring in any large proportion of women to the polls at all. I feel certain of this: that the women of the only class that would vote—the women who live in the various towns with their families—would not be the kind of women that would fulfil all the desires of those who wish to see the influence of women effectually felt in the politics of the country. At the proper time I shall oppose this provision, and, if I do not succeed in getting the provision expunged from the Bill, I shall join with those who propose to suspend its operation till after the next elections, when we can find what the country thinks about it. If that fails I shall

then endeavour to amend the Bill by anything which would modify it, as I think it would be better to alter it now. It is not from any want of respect to the other sex that I have always previously so strongly opposed, as I do now, the women's franchise, because I do respect the other sex, and do not wish to see women brought into contact with irritated politicians, and have their minds diverted from their proper and natural functions; but I think it is unwise to take the large step we are asked to take now. I hope that when the Bill goes into Committee—we cannot obstruct its second reading—there will be a sufficient opportunity of absolutely expunging this provision, or that it will be, at all events, postponed until after the next election.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—Sir, I shall support the second reading of this Bill. The machinery clauses of the Bill are, in my opinion, somewhat cumbrous, and they may with advantage be amended or altered in Committee; but the Bill, as a whole, will have my cordial support. The measure provides, first, for one vote one man, or, rather, as the Bill puts it, one vote for one person, and, secondly, “one person one roll.” The interpretation of the word “person” includes woman. Now, I am altogether in favour of the extension of the franchise to women. I have never been able to understand, nor have I ever heard, any arguments why this right, this privilege, should be kept from women, or women debarred from exercising it. I hold that it is the right of women to have a voice in the making of the laws under which they live. The principle expressed in the words “one man one vote” is almost universally accepted. Therefore there is no necessity for debating that point. The other principle—that is, “one man one roll”—I am sorry to say is not so universally accepted. I hold that, as long as persons who have one or more qualifications have the opportunity of choosing which qualification they shall register under, no great harm is done. It is accepted by politicians as an axiom that all persons should have equal voting-power, and I support that view, and I also believe that is the proper ground to work upon. I am altogether in favour, therefore, of equal political power in the matter of voting being given to the sexes. Now, what are the objections? The honourable and gallant member Sir George Whitmore, who has just sat down, spoke very forcibly against the extension of the franchise to women. I regret to say that none of the arguments he used had any effect upon my mind in changing my opinions. It may be said, and it is urged as an objection, that women do not want the franchise, and therefore it is useless giving it to them; but are men deprived of any privilege on its being shown that they do not ask for or value it? I say that it is not correct to say so of women. The presence on our Council table of a petition containing twenty-five thousand signatures, and of several petitions presented by the Hon. Mr. Oliver and other Councillors, containing, I believe, thirty-three or thirty-five

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thousand names, is evidence in favour of a desire on the part of a large section of the women of the colony to have the franchise. I would point out to the Council this fact: that no petitions are being presented this year either to this branch of the Legislature or to the other, opposing the granting of the franchise to women and signed by women. This is a fact I think this Council ought to bear in mind, and one they should pay considerable attention and weight to. It is also urged that women will not, even if you do grant them the franchise, use the privilege or right given them. I hold that that assertion is incorrect; but, even so, we know perfectly well that all men do not take advantage of the franchise, yet the fact that they do not take advantage of it is not advanced as an argument why they should not have it given to them. The argument will apply equally to women. I am quite prepared to admit that, for the first few years or more, or for some considerable time, women will not take advantage of the privilege; but that is no reason why those who desire to do so should be debarred. Since there is a section now of thirty-five thousand women of the colony who are desirous of having this right given to them, I say, Sir, they should have the opportunity of exercising that right or privilege which they claim. It is also advanced that, even if you do give them the right of being placed upon the roll, women will be influenced by their husbands, or brothers, or fathers—that they will vote with men—that they will vote with their male relatives. Well, supposing that such will be the case, where is the great disadvantage in giving it them? It will only duplicate the number of votes even at worst; and the same thing will apply to every section of the community. But such will not always be the case. We must admit that all men—all good men—are influenced in a great measure by good women, and most men are not above taking advice from a good, sensible woman. It would be absurd to say that women, even under the present circumstances, do not influence the elections in this colony considerably. There is, in my opinion, no question about it but they do. I say, very properly so: that influence they should exercise. And if they are capable of exercising it, and capable of expressing their opinions upon such matters as men have under discussion—political matters—why not give them the right to exercise their privilege, and to express their views, by voting with their fathers, or brothers, or husbands, as the case may be? It is also urged as an argument that it may lead to unpleasantness in a family,—to quarrels; that women may not follow their husbands in these matters. I think he must be a very mean creature of a man who will quarrel with a woman, or make it a cause of quarrel with her, because she exercises her right, or because she exercises what he claims a right to—that is, the right to his opinions. I cannot understand why men are so narrow-minded. But we find men who are so narrow-minded, and who claim all these privileges, but who have no consideration and no thought

for the opinions of others. Are they the best men in a community? Are they the men who lead? Men certainly have a right to their opinions. However, if allowed the right themselves, they should also allow others the same right they claim for themselves. I say the same argument is applicable to women. It will be said, of course, that women are not qualified to exercise their opinions; that they are not sufficiently educated; that, in fact, they do not understand the questions that will be submitted to them. I say those are very small objections, and there is nothing, in my opinion, to support such assertions. Let me say a word or two regarding the objections to the extension of the franchise, and in reply to the objections I have referred to, because I do not propose to weary the Council or to speak at great length upon this question. We are aware that the question has been fully discussed for several years, and what I have to say will probably not influence many votes in this Council. But, at the same time, I believe it my duty, as a new member, to take up a definite and decided stand upon this question, and I hope the Council will pardon me if I place before it my impressions and the reasons why I take up that stand. It is accepted as an axiom now that those who are governed have the right to a voice in the making of the laws under which they live. Very well. If that is admitted, I ask, are not women interested in the laws made in this country? I answer, Yes, and go further and say they are more interested in many of the laws passed in this colony than men. They are very much more interested in certain directions, and are very much better able to express an opinion upon certain laws, because they feel the effect of them more than men. They have a right to be interested in the good government of this country, and therefore I claim they have a right to express an opinion upon the laws that are made, and under which they live, and by which they will be governed. It has been said that women are not capable of expressing an opinion on political questions. I say that the educational system of the colony confers equal educational advantages on each sex and requires equal results, and experience has shown us that under similar conditions women can hold their own in nearly all branches of education. We are now giving degrees to the women of this colony, but they are not getting those degrees, you may be sure, without being qualified, and undergoing stiff examinations,—the same examinations as men. I say the evidence is altogether in favour of the women at the present day; and, whatever may be advanced in the past, they are capable, in my opinion, of expressing an intelligent opinion upon every political question that is before the people of the colony. It may be said, too, that the country at large, or the male electors of the colony, have not expressed an opinion favourable to the extension of the franchise to women. Now, I believe I am justified in saying that the contrary is the case. I believe you will not find many people in New Zealand

who will say that they are opposed to the extension of the franchise to women. And, if such is the case, why should this Council object to or stand in the way of the extension of this privilege to the women of the colony? This measure has been before this Council before, and it has been passed, I may say, without transgressing the rules of this House, in another branch of the Legislature on two previous occasions; and certainly every opportunity has been given to the country, to the electors of the country, to express an opinion upon the question. The most that can be said by the opponents of the measure is, that some electors have not expressed an opinion one way or another. But have they expressed an opinion against it? If not, I may assume the country has expressed a desire for the extension of the franchise to the women of the colony, and that this Council will be doing its duty in supporting this Bill. I think many of the objections raised are quite frivolous, and I have heard none that should, in my opinion, cause me to change my views upon this question. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore referred to the oft-made statement that the clergy would influence the women.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—May I ask the question, if the clergy will influence the women in the wrong direction?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Possibly.

The Hon. Mr. McCULLOUGH.—An honourable member says, "Possibly." Will the influence of the leaders and educators of the people, who are charged with the care of the morals of the community—the leaders who have to expound the moral laws—will they be likely to advise the women to do anything that is wrong? I do not think they will. They are a section of the community clearly interested in having good and wholesome laws, and I think there are no grounds for saying that they are likely to influence, or, at any rate, to exert any injurious influence upon, the elections. Such a course would be opposed to their own best interests. I again say that, if the clergy do exercise an influence upon the women, it will be in the right direction. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore also said that when the government of a country was handed over to the women it was an evidence of the decadence of that country. He referred to ancient history, and, although he did not go into particulars, we were aware of what he referred to. The honourable gentleman wishes us to believe that, because in ancient Rome women were allowed great latitude, and to exercise great power, the result was disastrous. My reading of ancient history tells me different. I say that it is unfair to refer to ancient history, and to say that, because of the evil state of things that prevailed in certain cases where the women were allowed great latitude, the effect will be the same here. But, on the contrary, the granting of power to women, I say, is an evidence of civilisation. I say it is an evidence of the progress and the civilisation of this colony, and we are certainly leading

the world in this matter. We are as competent to take a lead in matters of legislation as any other nation or any other country in the world. Our people are a well-educated people; taking them as a whole, they are better educated, perhaps, than any other people in the world. At any rate, I say, without fear of contradiction, that we are as competent as any Parliament or body of men in any part of the world to determine what are just and righteous laws. Therefore I do not think there was any weight in the argument used by the last speaker. The honourable gentleman also carried the argument rather far by asking, Was it right to intrust the defence of the colony to the women? and, if women received the right to vote, why should not our Police Force be recruited from the women of the colony? There is no one—not even the most advanced advocate of women's rights—who would claim that women should take all the rights and privileges and duties of men because they ask for the right to vote. Men and women have distinctive spheres of influence in this world, which laws will not override. The honourable gentleman also stated that women would not go to the polling-booth. Well, do all men go to the polling-booth? A good many of them are carried there, because they will not go. I say, Sir, that if it were not for the fact that many men are taken there they would not exercise their privilege at all. And, if that is an argument against giving the women the vote, why not apply it to the men? Under the Municipal Corporations Act women have a vote; and it has never been said that they should be prevented from exercising their privileges as voters, or that their votes were not exercised rightly. Quite the contrary is the fact. Therefore, I say that no argument I have heard is in any way in opposition to the extension of the franchise. I say that conferring this power on women is evidence of progress. It is an evidence that we are desirous of making an experiment, which, I think, will be attended with the best results. If the race is to progress, I think this is a Bill in the right direction. It gives independence to women, and places them in a position to exercise influence by right of citizenship. I believe it will advance the welfare of the race, and will improve matters for the coming generations: it will improve the status of women in every way you like to look at it. Therefore it will be a manifest advantage; and I believe it is a step towards the time we all hope is coming, when things will be better—when society will not be in the state it is in now; when women will be able to exercise influence to break down those barriers which now prevent a great part of the race from ever stepping out of the lowest and worst positions in society—when we have the very rich, and we have the very poor, the poor representing three-fourths of the whole, and the rich one-fourth, or even a greater disproportion. If ever we hope to see the realisation of the dream of those who have the welfare of humanity at heart, who desire to see

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society put upon a different footing from that on which it rests at present—if ever that day is to come about, then the extension of the franchise to women, the asking them to express an opinion upon and take a part in the legislation of the land, is a step in that direction; and therefore it is a very desirable and becoming step, and worthy of the support of all men who have the interests of the race at heart.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.—Sir, as to the second reading of this Bill being carried there is no question; it will go without a vote. And, as regards the Bill generally, probably the only desire of the Council will be to see that the machinery clauses of it are made as perfect as possible. But there are one or two points about the Bill upon which there rests with this Council a great responsibility, which, I trust, will be exercised in the most judicial and calm manner. First, as regards the “one man one vote,” and the qualifications: I think, myself, now that we have got “one man one vote,” it will be more logical, more satisfactory on the whole, that there should be only one qualification, and that the residential one. It is very often lost sight of in these electoral questions that the individual is a very small factor in the problem which is being worked out at an election. The result to be desired is the expressed will of the community, and whether the individual exercises his vote on a residential or a property qualification is very little to the individual but a great deal to the community; and, therefore, as a matter of principle, now we have got “one man one vote” and “one vote one roll,” I am of opinion that the Bill should be logical in its entirety and provide for only one qualification, and that the residential one. That is a matter, perhaps, of opinion, but I have no doubt we shall get to that some day, and perhaps it need not trouble us very much on the present occasion. But the second point to which I should like to draw the attention of the Council is this: the question of the seamen’s vote and the commercial travellers’ vote. Now, I quite recognise, Sir, that the desire to give those persons who are necessarily absent at elections their due opportunities of exercising the franchise is entirely laudable; but why exception should be made in the interests of seamen and commercial travellers is what I cannot understand. To begin with, I think the Legislature would be perfectly consistent in saying that, if individuals take up these occupations, which require their absence at certain times from their places of residence, they should take up those occupations with all the attendant disabilities. But another place has deliberately taken up a different position and said that in certain exceptional cases we shall give exceptional advantages; but I, for one, cannot subscribe to such exceptional legislation, nor assist in giving consideration specially for the advantage of either seamen or commercial travellers. Therefore, Sir, I shall endeavour to improve the measure by proposing amendments which will give every class of elector who happens to be

absent at an election the same advantages. I cannot understand why the experience in another colony has not been taken into consideration on this matter—the experience of the Colony of South Australia. Ever since the year 1890 there has been an Act there called the Absent Voters’ Electoral Rights Act, which has operated so satisfactorily that, although it was only brought in for a specified period, they are now renewing it, with amendments suggested by experience. I therefore intend to move in Committee—and I will give notice of my amendment in the course of the day—to strike out the words “seamen and commercial travellers,” and insert the words “absent voters,” with the other consequential amendments resulting from the change of term. That will give an opportunity to every person in the community who happens, necessarily, to be absent from his electorate on the day of voting; and I would also point out to those who are in favour of the female franchise that, if the ladies cannot get to the poll, it will give them the same advantages as the men. Why should commercial travellers have the special advantages which the measure now gives them, and school-mistresses on a holiday be debarred from having the same? I would place everybody, as far as I could, on the same footing; and the experience which the Colony of South Australia furnishes will enable the Bill to be put on a much more fair and satisfactory footing to all classes. Thirdly, we come to the question of woman’s franchise. It is a question, of course, on which everybody has made up his mind, probably, so far as the principle goes. Whether all will vote on that conviction or not I cannot say; but, still, at the same time, Sir, it is hardly worth while at this moment—when the question has been before this Council on previous occasions, and when we shall have another opportunity of discussing the principle involved—for me to say much as to the principle involved in extending the franchise to women. I simply wish to state my own position, and what I consider to be the duty of the Council on the present occasion. In the first place, I desire to say that on every occasion on which I have been called upon to vote in Parliament on this question I have voted against this extension. Whenever I have been asked on any public platform what my views were on this question I have given them in the same unhesitating manner against it, and I have seen no reason yet to change my opinions. At the same time, Sir, I acknowledge that this Council has a great duty and a great responsibility placed upon it on the present occasion. It has to sum up the whole question as far as it can, and give a judicial opinion, not so much upon what individual opinions are worth, but upon what the effects of this change will be on the future of the country. I say, Sir, the Council should think of that, and that only. Is it now in a position to judge as to what the will of the country is? Have we anything before us at this moment which will enable us to say that the country wants this tremendous leap into—it may be into the

abyss below; it may be, as the last speaker said, into the realms of bliss above? I say we have not that yet before us, and until we get that we have no right, as a revising and judicial branch of the Legislature, to indorse any such action as is now proposed by this Bill on this question. We have got before us, of course, petitions on the table—petitions running into many thousands of signatures, but, I believe, only from women. I shall go presently into the question as to what they are worth. I ask, where are the men of the colony on this occasion? Why are the men of the colony—the men who have borne all the burdens on their shoulders up to the present time—not represented in the petitions on the table of this chamber? What are their wishes on this question. Silence, in some cases, is supposed to give consent; but I maintain that the men of the colony, the average men of the colony, treat this as a huge joke, and do not believe there is anything serious in it. It is, of course, urged by advocates of this franchise that it has been passed by enormous majorities in another branch of the Legislature. But we must remember this was only the case in one Parliament. I remember very well when Sir Julius Vogel carried the second reading of a Bill in 1885, I think; but what happened to it in Committee? It was simply laughed out of the House. But, unfortunately, some candidates in this colony have got a habit of looking at what they call side-issues in a light-hearted way. When they are on the platform they are asked, Do you approve of this, do you approve of that, and do you approve of the other thing? Well, if it is not in the party programme, or what they have made up their minds to support—especially if they think it is an absurdity, as many of us thought woman's franchise was five years ago—many of them say, "Well, perhaps it will get a few votes; I'll chance it," and they consider themselves pledged to it. But I am quite sure of this: At the last election, three years ago, I do not believe any constituency in the whole colony thought woman's franchise was going to be made an immediate question in practical politics. What has been the history of the question since? The chief promoter of this measure in another place brought the question up, and, I dare say to his great surprise, he found he had a majority of gentlemen ready to support him, and it was carried. Then, most unfortunately, the late Premier of the colony took it up, and placed it in a Government measure the next session. I say, Sir, it was most unfortunate. One never likes to say anything reflecting on even the judgment of a dead man, whom we all respected, admired, and whose loss we all regret; but, though we shall always respect his memory, we must be allowed to say that, as far as the tactical part of the question was concerned, it was a great mistake. In the first place, in what position did it place his then colleagues? In what position does it place the honourable gentleman who leads this Chamber, and, I believe, the majority of his colleagues? It places the

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honourable gentleman leading this Chamber in the unfortunate position of being obliged to recommend a proposal in which he does not believe; and if the question were put to the Ministry as a whole we should find that probably the majority were against it. Not that I blame individual members of the Ministry, for I say it was an error of judgment on the part of the late Premier to place such a strain upon the opinions of his colleagues, and also, Sir, upon the opinions of his party, because, just as much as the Ministry, the Government party were divided on the question. Just as the Ministry was divided individually on the question, so is the party; and therefore in stating my opinions on this question I am not breaking away from the party. I am simply echoing the opinions of one and, I believe, the largest section of the party, who are at heart, I believe, opposed to this change.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.—Of course, every person is entitled to his own opinion. I have seen a good deal of the party during the last few years, and I believe I am stating what is a fact when I say that the Liberal party as a whole is as divided on this question as is the Ministry individually. I say it was a tactical mistake—an error of judgment—on the part of the late Premier, which placed the party in an unfortunate position,—his having taken up this question as a party measure. It also prevents the Council from coming to a direct issue on the question, because, as the Hon. Sir George Whitmore said, if we had this provision brought before us in a separate measure we could settle the matter on its merits. As it is, the Bill is before us, and this proposal is part of it, and we shall have to read the Bill a second time, and it will then simply be a question as to what we can do with it in Committee. I would much sooner have seen a question of this sort fought out on its own merits, and quite apart from the protection of a Ministry. I believe that would have been better for the country, and better for the justice of the case. I have been endeavouring to show that, in my opinion, the country is certainly not at one on this question, and certainly the Liberal party, and certainly the Ministry are not, if they were to give their individual opinions. I have referred to the fact that the men of the country have not approached this Chamber to get this extension of the franchise. On the other hand, there are twenty-five thousand, or even thirty thousand, women who have approached the Council asking to have conferred upon them this privilege. Well, how have these signatures been collected? We all know, from our experience, that signatures to petitions are very easily obtained, even by men; but when these petitions go round with women as their advocates, how much more likely is it that the signatures have been obtained in a very much more doubtful manner? We all know what a pest the book-fiend is in ordinary life. Perhaps honourable gentlemen may have noticed from some of the newspapers that in certain localities the female book-fiend has turned up,

and she has proved herself to be a sort of pest so much superior in aggravation to the male book-fiend that absolutely certain offices are obliged to put up notices prohibiting anything in the shape of a petticoat from getting into the building. I believe, Sir, that the advocates of this women's franchise who have been promoting these petitions have been getting the signatures in such a way as to prevent any weight attaching to a very large proportion of the signatures. I go no further than that. I would not for one moment say that persons whose names are attached are not, as they are represented to be, over the age of twenty-one, but still, at the same time, I say that petitions of this sort must be taken with a great deal of salt, particularly considering the way in which they are got up, and also considering that there are no petitions from men in support of them. If the cause were one which was likely to prove to the benefit and satisfaction of the people, as its supporters believe and profess, I am quite sure the men of the colony would have subscribed and signed petitions in its favour as well; and, although noisy advocates are to be found within these sacred precincts, the country is much more quiet and much less agitated about this matter than some people would make us believe. At the same time, I know great disappointment will be occasioned in certain directions by this measure not being passed, and I admit that, of course, dissatisfaction and disappointment will be felt by certain sections of the community who hope a great deal, and hope most conscientiously, that good will result from this change; but at the same time we have to consider, here is only possible good—a possible good is all the advocates of this measure can promise us—a possible good; and against that we, this Council, have got to weigh well into what evils it may precipitate us, to what depths we may go if we pass it. If ever there was a measure over which this Council should pause, and wait till the deliberate voice of the country speaks in its favour, this is one. It has never been seriously before any Parliament except this one, and therefore, though it has passed the Lower House three times with large majorities, I say that is only one expression of opinion from the same body, though expressed three times over. It is only the expression of opinion of one House. It is only the expression of a House which treated it as a side-issue; and therefore it is our bounden duty on the present occasion to determine that we will send it back to the people and ask them at the coming election to say what they really do want. I quite recognise that our duty as a revising Chamber is not always to insist upon our own will in these constitutional changes, and, if the will of the people is clearly conveyed to us in such a way that we cannot mistake it, I for one will not withstand it. But I urge that, at the present moment, if ever there was cast upon an Upper House in any part of the world a duty, plainly and clearly, it is cast upon us. We have now to hang this up until the people say what they desire. I have heard some mem-

bers say, in conversing on this matter, that it must come about and we may just as well take it now as later. I say that is not a fair way to look at it, and that it is simply shuffling with responsibility. I say if that is the only reason why members vote for this thing, although they do not believe in it, they ought to take the view I do, and say, "Let the people speak plainly on the matter." But simply to say, "It must come, therefore it is just as well to take it now as later," is, I think, trifling with a very serious subject. I ask every honourable member who is not conscientiously convinced of the advantages to be gained by this extension of the franchise to treat it as I do, and say, "Let it be held over until the people speak plainly on the subject." It is an experiment, everybody must admit: even its advocates say it is an experiment; but they believe it will be one for good, and they point to other countries; but the other countries which took it up as an experiment are very few, and they are very different from ours. The only countries in the world I know which have seriously taken up this question are some States in America. Well, Sir, government in the States of America is so different from anything we can conceive that it is impossible for us either to place ourselves in their place or argue from them to us in any particular. As far as we can learn of the government in some parts of the United States, we can quite conceive why, in desperation, the men are fleeing to women, or anybody else, who would govern them better than they were being governed by the men. Everything connected with government had sunk so low, had got into the hands of such unscrupulous schemers, that decent persons absolutely refused to have anything to do with government; and I am not at all astonished that, in desperation, these places were exceedingly glad to get strong-minded females, or anybody else, who would help them out of the difficulties into which they had got—socially, commercially, judicially, and in every relation of life. There was not a fountain from which pure water ought to have sprung but was polluted by the touch of the desperado, the schemer, and the adventurer. Woman, therefore, possibly may have been asked to step into the breach, and she may have done her work well. But to argue from that case to ours is a perfectly different thing, I contend. Our best men have never shown themselves averse from taking their due share in the government of the colony and in the performance of civic duties. Our sense of public duty is high, has always been high. We have been fortunate in having in this colony men who handed down to us all the best virtues of which our forefathers were possessed, and by which we hope to hand down to our sons an unsullied name. Therefore there is no occasion for us to take to desperate resources, and to fortify ourselves in a time of danger, as they have done in America. I contend that the circumstances in America present an absolutely opposite case, and that there is no necessity for us to fly to such an experiment—for everybody must admit

it is solely an experiment—which is just as likely, to put it mildly, to be for bad as it is to be for good. I have another fault to find with this Bill as far as the women are concerned. Granted that they are to get the franchise, which the Bill proposes to give to them; granted that they are to have this privilege of voting, to be placed on an equal footing with men so far as voting is concerned, the Bill falls lamentably short of what it ought to be. It professes to give women equal rights with men, and yet says they are not qualified to sit in this House. Well, I say that, if women are equal to men as far as electoral matters are concerned, if they are to have the privilege of voting on equal terms with men, then we have no right to say they are not fit to be nominated as members of this Chamber or to be elected to the other Chamber; and, more than that, if this clause is passed, and equal privileges are given to women with men, I say they must have equal duties. Every line in the statute-book which makes a distinction between “he” and “she” must be repealed, and women must be prepared to share equally with men the severer duties which are placed upon men. For instance, I think they should be drawn as jurymen; they must absolutely share every duty which falls upon men at the present time. How did men come to fulfil their duties as colonists? Simply by learning that before privilege came duty. Duty is what has brought men to what they are now, and they did not get the franchise all at once, as it is now proposed to give it to women, but gradually, until the privilege was extended, by education and experience, to what it is now. This is a proposal to ruin the franchise at one blow, on the petition of thirty thousand women, who have never done one day’s work for the community from a public point of view; who are absolutely ignorant of the ABC of duty or responsibility in a public sense. I speak of women generally, and must here dissent from what my honourable friend Sir George Whitmore said upon this subject. He seemed to think that the women of the towns would be a dangerous factor if they were enfranchised. I say they will not, in my opinion. Women in the towns, especially those who belong to the trade-unions and other trade associations, will probably be the only women in the community able to exercise intelligently the privilege of voting. The plea I have to urge against the general enfranchisement of the whole sex is that they have not, in any shape or form, been wont to recognise that responsibility and duty which citizens ought to exercise in a deliberate and judicial way. I say that, if this clause is passed, they must be enfranchised not only as regards voting at the polling-booth, but they must in every other sense be made equal to men, and brought to learn the lesson of duty and responsibility, as we have been brought to do ourselves. I think I have said enough to show how I shall vote on this occasion. All I desire to say is, that I feel that this is a very responsible occasion for every member of this Council, and I trust that the Council will treat

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it in the most judicial way, and, considering all the facts of the case, treat it as a question which fairly ought to be remitted to the constituencies for their opinion at the general election.

The Hon. Mr. SCOTLAND.—Sir, as I am not a party man, never was a party man, and am never likely to be a party man, I shall not look on this Bill with party spectacles, or say or think anything as to what party it will most affect, or anything else. I do not agree with all that the Hon. Sir George Whitmore has said, but I agree with him certainly in one thing. I object to seeing this colony made the subject of this experiment. I do not see why we should be so ready to push ourselves forward and to take the lead in instructing the world. Last year we went so far as to advise the Emperor of Russia as to how he should govern a portion of his subjects, and very nicely we got snubbed for our pains, and I was very glad to see it. Now we want to take the lead again, and enfranchise women. We want, in fact, to go as fast as America, and on this question I am rather nervous about attempting to go as fast as America. I always thought America was, *par excellence*, the land of women, the land where women have more power, more influence, politically and socially, and in every other way. Now we want to do as America has done, and give a vote to the women. This plan has only been tried in one State—the State of Wyoming. It has been in force there twenty-four years; and what sort of people are the people of Wyoming? A most lawless set. The people there are said to be just as savage as red men. Their skins may be white, certainly, but it takes something else than white skins to make a difference between a civilised man and a savage. Possibly the women in Wyoming are more civilised than the men, and, if that is so, perhaps it is well they should govern the country there. As for that heap of petitions there, which is something in the shape of a cheese, I have not the slightest respect for it. If it was large enough to reach to the top of the ceiling I should have very little more respect for it. Now, I think the greater the number of signatures to a petition the greater the humbug. I am old enough to remember the Chartist petitions that were sent in in 1848, signed by, I think, over two million people, and among the names appeared the name of the Duke of Wellington. Most of the petitions before us seem to have come from the South, and especially from Dunedin. I dare say the Dunedin people are very fine people. Scotch people have very fine qualities. At the same time, they stand very much in awe of the “meenister,” and even of the shadow of the “meenister.” I should like to know what share of meenisterial influence there has been in getting up these petitions. I am told there are a great many names bearing the same initials in these petitions. I hope all the signatures are genuine, I am sure. But, even supposing them to be all genuine, we will say only one-seventh of the women in the colony have signed. Well, I do not call that an

overwhelming majority. The majority of these signatures come mostly from the South, and mostly from Dunedin. As to the clerical influence, we know that it has always been exercised, from the very earliest times in the government of the world, through women, and I suppose it will always be so to the end of time. I am one of those old-fashioned people who believe in the story of the fall of man—the fall of the human race. In that case the devil did not tempt the man; he knew better than to do that: he knew he had only to secure the woman, and he had got the man safe enough. Priests and other persons follow on the same lines: they know they have only to make sure of the ladies and they have got the gentlemen safe enough. Of course, the women who are calling out for the franchise, and for the other thing which is to follow by-and-by, are not all under clerical influence; we must make some allowance for the theosophists, and all the other phists, and for the peculiar influence on the subject of the tenets promulgated by these people. Many of them write M.A. and B.A. after their names. With regard to the writing of M.A. and B.A. after ladies' names, the Hon. Mr. McCullough points to that as an example of what a woman is capable of; but what does it prove? It merely proves that a woman is capable of as much cram as a man. But does it prove that women can originate anything? I say, with all respect to the female brain, it is as strong as the male brain on some questions, but it is not the same kind of brain. It is not the brain to originate. Who ever heard of a female Shakespeare, or a female Raphael, or a female Mozart. Even in music women can do nothing whatever, and you would have thought music was a subject specially suited for females; but they have never excelled in it. And I say, as a legislator woman would be a failure, for, if you are to grant woman suffrage, how are you going to prevent women by-and-by from occupying seats in this Chamber or in the other Chamber? You could not logically do so; and you could not justly do so. I should not feel justified at all in voting against a woman as a Legislative Councillor or a member of the House of Representatives, if once the franchise had been given to her, for whoever is fit to exercise a vote for a member has an equal right to be eligible for a seat as a member. The Hon. Mr. McCullough talked about the deplorable state of society out of which woman was to raise us. Surely he is paying a very poor compliment to women. If society is in such a deplorable state, where has been the female influence all this time? If society is in such a bad state, surely woman has something to do with allowing it to fall into that state. As for this being a Conservative measure, that is a mere surmise. My opinion is that it is a leap in the dark, if ever there was such a thing in the world. We do not know what the result may be. I do not know that it will be for good, myself, and I cannot say for certain it will turn out badly, and no one has a right to say the result will be in a Conservative direction, or that it will be instructive. How is it that

we hear no outcry in other countries for this sort of thing? It seems to me that we have no sense of the ridiculous. There are strong-minded women in France, but they do not cry out for the franchise or to sit as legislators; neither do women in Germany, or in any other country in the world. Why is this little colony to take the lead and to show the world what the colony can do? Are the women of other countries inferior to the women of New Zealand? The Hon. Mr. McCullough seemed to think the Hon. Sir George Whitmore put an extreme case in talking about women being put into the Police Force; but is that honourable gentleman aware that only a few days ago there appeared in one of the papers a notice that some ladies in England were discussing the propriety of forming themselves into a rifle volunteer corps? That is not a bit more ridiculous than putting women in the Police Force. I shall vote against this clause, and against female suffrage in any form or shape, because I am quite certain that the majority of the women of the colony do not want it. I can truly say that I never met a woman of any class who ever expressed a wish to exercise the franchise. I have heard many ridicule the goings-on in Parliament here, but I have never heard them say they thought if they were in Parliament they could do any better. It is out of respect to women that I shall vote against this. It is not woman's province, and I think if it became law it would be introducing a very dangerous element, which might be destructive of the peace of the whole colony. An honourable gentleman entreated us yesterday not to interfere with the marriage-law as it stands. Let us apply his advice to this law, and not interfere with the unwritten law of the people.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—Sir, in dealing with the Bill in question, I must say that, although I am in favour of it as a whole, yet I think there are one or two blots in it, and in one or two remarks I should like to point out where those blots occur. In the first place, I think in the matter of qualification there is certainly a blot. I cannot see that any reasonable or just excuse can be given for conferring the electoral right in any other way than by residential qualification. I cannot see that leasehold or freehold qualification is just or reasonable; therefore I think it is a blot. The next is as regards electoral rights. Well, I will not go so far as the Hon. Sir George Whitmore has gone regarding electoral rights, either as regards women or those who may be absent from home at the time of an election. I do think that if electoral rights are to be conferred at all they should not be confined to seamen and commercial travellers. I think that those classes of men who are accustomed to go into the country and work—the shearers and the harvesters—should be given the same right as seamen and commercial travellers; and, Sir, I intend when the Bill is in Committee to move in that direction. I shall not go so far as to propose too great an alteration, as it might tend to kill the Bill. It was the provisions for electoral rights for women that were put

in the Bill that killed the Bill last year. There is another point which I wish to see rectified in the Bill, and that is the time of closing of the polls. The clause says the polls shall close at six o'clock, but that in certain districts mentioned in the schedule to the Bill the polls shall be open till seven. I know from personal experience that six o'clock is not late enough for men to record their votes, and if we keep the polls open simply in these districts mentioned in the schedule, and close the others at six o'clock, it will certainly disfranchise a great number of people. I know perfectly well there are a number of men who are working in the City of Wellington, but who are residing in the Hutt District, which is in the suburbs of Wellington. Now, it is quite impossible for men working in offices and warehouses in Wellington until six o'clock to reach the poll and record their votes if the poll closes at six o'clock at the Hutt. And it is the same in the other centres. The Government, in another place, have rectified it to a certain extent in the schedule in the case of some districts, but I do not think it goes far enough. In Committee I shall move that the whole of the polls shall remain open until seven o'clock. That will mean no hardship in the country districts; it will simply keep the Returning Officers an hour later, and I am sure that little inconvenience will be compensated for by the number of farm-servants and others who will be able to vote before the poll closes, between six and seven o'clock. Now a few words with regard to the great question which crops up in the Bill, in case honourable members should forget it is in the Bill—that is, the women's franchise. We have had to-day one or two objections offered by the opponents of the Bill, but I do not think any great weight can be attached to the reasons given. The one given by the Hon. Mr. Walker is really no reason. He admits that thirty thousand women have asked for the franchise, but he asks, "Where are the men? Why have they not asked that this power be given to the women?" But is it a reason, because men have not asked that women should have the franchise, that they should not be given the franchise? The men have it already; it is the women that ask for it now. It is the same argument that was used when manhood suffrage was introduced, and that will be seen from *Hansard*. Manhood suffrage was not asked for as this has been. There was no petition whatever, and yet it was granted; and I dare say if the Hon. Mr. Walker had been in his place then he would have been among those who voted for that principle. Now, although he admits that thirty thousand women have asked for the franchise, because the men have not asked that the women should have it, he does not think they ought to get it. Then, there was a reason given by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore, and it is rather an amusing reason. He seems to think the franchise should not be conferred on women for one reason, and that is, because some woman he has been driving with has been accustomed to clutch hold of the reins.

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I do not know that that is any particular reason why women should not have the franchise. It might indicate that we should not have so many accidents if the women had the reins. I am quite prepared to give women part of the control of the horses and chariot of legislation. There is another argument that is often advanced against giving this franchise to women, and that is, the fear that it would degrade woman.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—Well, Sir, it is difficult to see where the degradation will come in, if women are asked to record their votes for members of the House of Representatives. I only hope the honourable gentleman who says "Hear, hear" will be able to show where the degradation comes in. I fail to see where there is any degradation in asking a woman to vote as to who shall be the people to make the laws for the government of the country and the guidance of their children. Is it degrading to ask a woman to accompany her husband to the polls to record her vote? Is it degrading to a tailoress that she should have some power in amending factory-laws? Sir, there is no degradation. As to the imaginary danger from giving woman a vote, I cannot see where there is any danger attached to such a course. A vote is given to women even now. Women who hold property have a right to record their votes at some elections, though I fail to see any difference between a woman who holds property and one who does not, and I am quite sure there should be no distinction made between a woman who holds property and one who does not. There is no danger to be feared from this extension of the franchise. It is quite the other way: the safety of the country almost hangs upon it, in my opinion. It has also been said that the women do not want it; and we find the Hon. Mr. Scotland saying that he does not attach any weight to that roll—or cheese, as he called it—of petitions in favour of woman's suffrage. Does he suppose that every one of those women, those thirty thousand women, in this colony would go and put down her name there without knowing what she was asking for? Does he think that all those women would be so simple-minded as to go and put their names down on paper for something they did not want? Such an argument is simply ludicrous; and, Sir, it is absolutely untrue to say that this petition is made up of bogus names.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Look at it.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—Yes, I see it; and there are no bogus names there. It is made up of sincere deep-thinking women, who are quite prepared to use their votes whenever they get the right to do so. Then, we have this reason adduced: Because women have not asked for and do not want this, they will not vote. Well, Sir, I do not think it requires very much argument to prove that they will vote; and I will just read an extract from the *North American Review* to show that women will exercise the franchise when they get it. It relates to the State of Massachusetts, where

the franchise was conferred on the women in connection with the School Committees. It says,—

“Before the day of election of a School Committee in the State of Massachusetts, although the time was short, twenty-six thousand women had qualified votes, and, of these, nineteen thousand went to the polls and cast their ballots, in such inclemency of weather as kept hosts of men off the streets. They revolutionised the School Committee, and aroused a public spirit that forbade the manipulation of the common schools in the interests of any sect.”

I think that completely disproves the assertion that women would not vote if they got the franchise. Then, we have had another argument put forward in this Chamber several times: that, if we conferred the franchise on women, they should not be allowed to exercise it at once—that it should be deferred until after the next general election. I think, if it would be just to confer the privilege then, it would be just to confer it now; and therefore, Sir, I contend that the vote should be given at once. I cannot see any reason or justice in the arguments adduced for delaying to confer this right, because if it will be just to give it three years hence it is just and right to do so now. I should like to draw attention to the few remarks that passed in another place regarding the “twelve apostles” that came to this Chamber lately. We were told that our duty was to come here and to vote for the proposals of the Government, and that that was the only reason why we are here. Now, what preposterous nonsense. Have our actions since we have been here given colour to such a view? Nothing of the sort. We have voted against those measures that we did not think good measures, and shall do so again: and we find that some intend to vote against this measure. I was pained to find that a very personal allusion was made to my honourable friend who sits by me in regard to this duty laid down. I should just like to ask that old man from Dunedin who made the allusion what he was sent into the House for. Why, Sir, for his blind allegiance.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Order.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must not say that.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—Then I will simply say, Sir, that the remarks made by some honourable members in the other place were in very bad taste indeed. There was another reason adduced by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore—and other members have also urged it—namely, that the views of the people should be taken in this matter before we decide.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON.—The Hon. Mr. Shrimski also says, “Hear, hear.” I do not think that this question of the woman’s franchise is a very new thing. I am comparatively a very young man, but I remember it was spoken of many years ago; and surely within the last ten years the men of the colony and the women of the colony have had sufficient

knowledge of the matter to say whether they will vote for the woman’s franchise or not: and they have more than once affirmed it. I fail to see why we in this Chamber should refer this matter to the country. I should be very sorry indeed to take my seat in this Chamber if I had to be bound down to refer matters again and again to the country. Our place is rather to come here and to show the way to the country. We are sent here to lead the people, rather than to be led, and I, for one, would never sit here and allow a question to go past simply for the reason that we must again have the voice of the country. There is no need to call us together at all if such a course is to be taken. Rather let a general *plébiscite* of the country be taken, and let the Clerk come here, or, if the votes were taken in any other way, let him simply count the votes, and then the matter would become law. The argument that the voice of the country is again wanted before we pass this measure will not hold water. Mr. Gladstone said thirty years ago that the duty of statesmen was to lead the people, not to be led by them; and in this progressive age surely we will not take a backward step! I say that there is no need for this matter to go back to the country again, simply because we do not know our own minds. Now for the reason adduced that it is not a popular measure. I think this reason is the opponents’ only one. Those who support the Conservative party think that the vote of the women would wreck their party. The same reason has also been given by the supporters of the Liberal party. I would simply say, Sir, that, so far as regards any party, I do not care one rush what party it wrecks, so long as the women have votes, because I am quite satisfied in my own mind that by giving a vote to them you will launch a new party upon the sea of politics, and that party will be a right party. I shall vote for the proposal, and shall support the second reading of the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Sir, I was very glad to hear from the honourable gentleman who spoke last that he considers that the new members who joined us this session are not going to be bound by party ties in any votes that they may give in this House. I am glad to know that they recognise that we all are here to give an independent vote according to our convictions, and not upon any party grounds. Sir, the greater part of this Bill deals with electoral machinery, and I do not think there are in it any matters, considering the position of the law now, that are urgent except the one question that is dealt with by three words in the interpretation clause of the Bill. The Bill must necessarily go to a second reading. I do not think there is any doubt about that, and, every question, great or small, in the Bill must be dealt with separately, and be voted upon separately and distinctly; but there are several questions which must necessarily be considered, and which ought to be discussed, on the second reading. I do not wish to take up the time of the Council at any length upon these questions, but there

are one or two which must be noticed before we deal with the main issue. One which is really of great interest to the country, and which I should like to draw attention to, is this: The 6th section contains a provision giving the right of a freehold qualification, while at the same time, in a subsequent clause of the same section, it is provided that no person may be registered in more than one district. Surely it is absurd—I am not going into the question now of freehold or leasehold qualifications, or any other—that by one clause we pretend to give the right of voting on a freehold qualification, and by another clause immediately succeeding we take it away. That is, practically, the effect of the two clauses. With regard to the leasehold clause which was said to have been added to this Bill, I do not think it is necessary to refer to it, because the words which appear in the interpretation of the Bill are not operative. With regard to the freehold qualification, it is provided here that any one who has property in an electoral district can put his name down there, and can vote in that district. At the same time, it is provided that a man who has a residential qualification and has put his name down has a vote in the district in which he resides. But it is provided also that a man can only put his name upon one roll. I ask, what difference can it make to a man whether his name is down as a freeholder or a resident in any one district? None whatever. The only advantage he could have by getting his name down as a freeholder in any district would be this: If he lived in one district and possessed property in another, he might have the choice of exercising his vote in the district in which he lived or in the district in which he had the property, so that, if at election-time an elector might be in another district, in which he had property, he might vote there instead of in the district in which he generally lived. This clause in the Bill which says that a man is only to have his name down on one roll in the country practically takes away any possible privilege that is left to a freeholder by the preceding clause. Well, Sir, there is another provision which I should like to allude to—that is, the provision in Part III. of the Bill which deals with the rights given to commercial travellers and seamen. Now, all the difficulty and ambiguity that there are in this matter, and all the trouble brought upon the Government and upon the Legislature, arise entirely because the question of electoral rights has not been faced as a question in itself. There is no reason whatever why electoral rights should not be taken out by every voter. That should be the only ground upon which they should tender their votes. It has been found, practically, that that system does away with all personation and corruption. I am going to read to the Council a letter which has been put into my hands, which will show honourable members the trouble the Government have got into, and the suspicion they have to face, through not making up their minds to deal generally with this

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question of electoral rights. This is a letter put into my hands by an honourable gentleman in another place, the honourable member for Ashburton, and addressed to him by the Ashburton Liberal Association:—

“Ashburton Liberal Association,

“15th August, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,—In view of the reported remarks of the Hon. the Premier on the Electoral Bill, this Committee unanimously adopted the following resolution: ‘That this association has no confidence in the Liberalism which distinguishes between the intelligence and property of commercial travellers and that of shearers.’

“ALFRED A. CARSON, Hon. Sec.”

Well, Sir, that shows, as I said before, the position the Government are put in by not facing that question, which, I am sure, would be interesting, and would be taken up by the Legislature generally—namely, a general system of voting on electoral rights. But the question that really overshadows all others in the Bill before us is that of the woman's franchise, and that is a question which, I think, ought to be decided without any side-issues or subterfuges—“Yes” or “No”—by the Legislature. The whole question has been brought before the people of New Zealand to a great extent, and not on its merits, but in order to further the interests of an agitation on a different subject altogether. It is one of the dangers of modern legislation that there is a tendency to enact general laws in order to meet local or temporary difficulties, and, worst of all, in order to meet some pressing demand, to sacrifice every interest that comes in the way. That is a result of a great deal of what is called “experimental legislation.” But surely we ought to draw the line somewhere. We ought to hesitate when we are asked to revolutionise society in a sense opposed to the belief, to the experience, of men and women in every age and in every country in the world. I do not think the advocates of this measure realise the momentous issues that are at stake, for, if they did, it is charitable to suppose that they would not press the Bill forward for the sake of gaining votes or to promote some special agitation, however good they may esteem the cause. This is, as a theoretical question, a very old one. It is a great deal older than many honourable gentlemen suppose. More than two thousand years ago it was discussed, half seriously, by philosophical dreamers. It is only lately that there has been an attempt to experiment on it in two immature communities of the new world. But in no case has it been suggested that if we give the right to women to vote for any office you can debar them from being eligible for the office itself. Therefore we must face this measure not merely as one giving a right to women to vote for members of Parliament, but as one which will ultimately lead to their right to sit as members of Parliament.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Certainly.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—That is the nature of the revolution which we are asked to initiate

to-day. As I said before, more than two thousand years ago Plato—in that strange, unpractical, ideal republic in which philosophers were to be the rulers, and women were to be put absolutely on the same plane as men,—sharing their dangers, their work, their responsibilities, their very warfare,—did not shrink from the suggestion that the family was to be abolished, marriage was to be done away with, and all domestic life was to come to an end. In modern times there have not been wanting leaders in this agitation who have suggested the same prospects for us, especially among the socialistic wing of the movement for what is called “woman’s emancipation.” I do not know, Sir, whether this Council is prepared to run the risk of such a revolution. It certainly is one which will startle a good many women who have taken a part in this agitation. The first step towards the abolition of the distinction between man and woman—for it comes to that—is the beginning of a social and ethical revolution, of which we do not see the end. Many women are playing with this question now, without knowing they are dealing with a question which will be wrenched from their grasp by hands stronger, coarser, and more selfish than their own. They do not know what they are doing, and I hope they never will. You may depend upon it, in the future it is women who will rue the day, when we initiate a system that will tend to unsex them. So far, Sir, we have not gained much information from the experiments that have been tried. Acts for the enfranchisement of women were passed in two Territories of the United States—the Territory of Wyoming and the Territory of Washington. Wyoming has since, I believe, become a State. In the Territory of Washington the Act was repealed soon after it was passed; and Mr. Bryce tells us that a leading man in the Territory wrote to him that while the law was in existence women took very little part in voting, and did not seem to value the privilege at all: in fact, they seemed very much relieved when they were relieved from the responsibility of going to the poll. It is rather interesting to refer to what Mr. Bryce tells us in that well-known book of his on the American Commonwealth. For the benefit of those who think that everything that is revolutionary must be Liberal, I may be allowed to remind the Council that Mr. Bryce is an ardent Liberal. Regarding what has been done in Wyoming, he tells a very curious story of the way in which the Act was passed there. The question had been discussed a good deal without effect, when it occurred to some astute wire-pullers to suggest to both parties in the House that they would “jockey” the other side if they took up this question; and when the Bill was carried one day by a large majority there was great consternation expressed on all sides. It is not difficult for us to understand and appreciate this story, as we know what has happened in another place not a hundred miles distant from this Council. I think that the insincerity in the State of

Wyoming has been equalled by that in another place. Well, Sir, Mr. Bryce says it is very difficult to find out, owing to the partisan feeling that exists there still, what has been the result in Wyoming. But, on the whole, he thinks it is not in favour of the experiment, and quotes, from a gentleman who, he says, is one of the most trustworthy authorities there, the following opinion:—

“After the first excitement is over, it is impossible to get respectable women out to vote, except every two or three years on some purely emotional question, such as prohibition or other temperance legislation. The effect on family life seems to be nil, certainly not bad; but after a year or two it is found that the women of the worst classes are those that most regularly go to the polls.”

Yes, Sir, there is the danger—there is the great danger that faces us at once on this question. Into the hands of what sort of women are we going to hand over power, and at what cost of the best feminine influence destroyed? This is a very serious matter, and one which I do not think has been fairly considered. The petitions here on the table have been spoken of. In spite of all those petitions, I maintain that the great mass of the thoughtful women of the country are still opposed to this measure. It will become a tyranny for them; they are afraid of being forced to take part in what they do not think their business, and do not wish to take part in, in order to prevent the power passing into the hands of the least worthy of their sex. Is that a position we should put women in without consulting them? For they have not been consulted at present. We all know how petitions are got up, and how easy it is to get men and women to sign anything that is pressed on them with importunity. Great is the importunity of agitators! A lady of my acquaintance was surprised to hear that a neighbour of hers who had always opposed the women’s franchise had signed a petition in favour of it. She asked her why she had done so. “Oh,” she said, “the fact is, Mrs. So-and-so came here so often and bothered me so much that at last I signed it to get rid of her; and I do not think it very much matters.” Nor does it!

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at five o’clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 18th August, 1893.

Rangiriri Monument—G. Fisher—Sheep-shears—North Canterbury Board of Education—N. Fryday—Imperial-guaranteed Debentures—Railway Saloon-Carriages—Taranaki Highwayman—Wanganui Hospital Attendant—Mangamuka Hotel—Wairoa Roads—C. J. Russell—Endowed Schools Bill—Defence—New Zealand Institute Bill—Bettlements Bill—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—Periodical Returns—Supply.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o’clock.

PRAYERS.

RANGIRIRI MONUMENT.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Premier, if he will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of supplementing the sum already and that may hereafter be subscribed for the purpose of erecting a monument at Rangiriri to the memory of the naval and military defenders who fell at the attack on the Maori position on the 20th November, 1863, and in other engagements in the Waikato, and in memory, also, of the colonial forces who, comrades-in-arms with the Imperial forces, fell in various engagements during the Waikato campaign? In asking the question, he desired to read a letter he had received that day:—

“Government House, Wellington,

“New Zealand, 11th August, 1898.

“DEAR MAJOR HAMLIN,—This morning I received from India, from the 2nd W. Yorkshire Regiment, the sum of £8 16s. 5d., in answer to my appeal for the graves at Rangiriri.

“There is at Auckland, in the hands of the secretary, General Trust Board, a further sum of £8 15s. 3d., subscribed some time ago by the 12th Regiment. As the other two regiments concerned, to which I wrote, will also probably send subscriptions shortly, perhaps the Government will grant the necessary addition to this fund to raise a suitable memorial at Rangiriri. —Yours truly,

“R. HUNTER BLAIR.”

The other day he had asked a question on somewhat similar lines, and the Premier then stated that he thought it would be better to raise subscriptions for this purpose. He had now, as it would be seen, made an addition to his question, and he did trust on this occasion the Premier would see his way to do something towards commemorating the memory of those who fought for the colony in early days. During the time of the war there were no settlers in that part of the country; it was a matter of the supremacy of the Crown; and hence, he thought it was only fair to ask the House to vote, say, £200 on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of erecting a monument to the men who fought on behalf of Her Majesty, to preserve the colony as one of her dependencies. He did not think that the Premier, after consideration, would give the same answer as he had made the other day; at any rate, he hoped not. The matter was one of colonial importance, and it could not be expected that a locality in a certain part of the colony should alone erect such a monument. He hoped the Premier would see his way to do this, more especially as there was a direct promise made by the Governor at the time to the Commander of the Forces that some monument should be erected to the memory of these men.

Mr. SEDDON said he had given the honourable gentleman an answer some time ago to a somewhat similar question. The honourable gentleman had thrown some additional light on the subject by what he had now stated, but he could not give him that day a decided answer. Later on he would give him a reply.

G. FISHER.

Mr. FISHER moved the adjournment of the House. Under ordinary circumstances he would have been content to ask permission to make a personal explanation, but he could not in the circumscribed limits of a personal explanation say all he wished to say. He moved the adjournment for the purpose of calling attention to a subleader which appeared in that morning's *New Zealand Times*, which said,—

“FUTILE PRECAUTIONS.

“It is instructive to hear Mr. Fisher asking for the printing of the whole correspondence which passed on a certain famous occasion. Great efforts were made on that occasion to prevent the printing. The motion for printing was opposed in the House by Mr. Fisher, and defeated; the documents were referred to the Printing Committee, and there the printing was prevented. A large portion of the papers had been already printed, and great care was taken to destroy these and disperse the type. But *cui bono*? After all that trouble the correspondence, having been laid on the table, remained part of the records of the House, and, as such, accessible to every member. Its appearance in print has been a strong probability for the last four years. Mr. McLean got one of the letters, a remarkably powerful composition, into *Hansard* the other day, and now Mr. Fisher wants the whole correspondence printed. How much better it would have been to have had the whole correspondence printed at the time he now probably realises. In these matters publicity is the best policy. Whatever advantage is gained by covering up is invariably lost by unlooked-for exposure.”

He intended answering these statements one by one. One sentence said that great efforts were made on that occasion to prevent the printing of the papers. Yes, great efforts were made to prevent the printing. But by whom? He would presently show. Then, it said when the motion for printing was before the House it was opposed by Mr. Fisher. Where was the motion? There was no such motion. There never was such a motion. The motion of Sir Harry Atkinson was merely that the correspondence be laid on the table; and to that he (Mr. Fisher) greatly objected unless it were also ordered to be printed. Then, it was said that “A large portion of the papers had been already printed, and great care was taken to destroy these and disperse the type.” Yes, that was true; the Printing Committee ordered the papers to be destroyed, and dispersed the type. The Government majority on the Committee were determined that he should be debarred from receiving justice. It said then that “its appearance in print has been a strong probability for the last four years.” Answer: The complete correspondence, including the letter read by the honourable member for Wellington City, and reproduced in *Hansard* No. 10, p. 47, had been in print for the last four years. Then, “how much better that the whole correspondence should be printed.” Answer: The whole complete correspondence

was printed in full in the *New Zealand Times*, of the 4th and 5th July, 1889. Now, how came it that this letter was resurrected in Parliament at that time of day? Answer: Because he had taken upon himself a few days ago to expose the corrupt administration of the past Governments of the member for Inangahua, who chose to vacate his seat every time he knew that this subject was to come up. He it was who dived into the records and resurrected this letter, and handed it to the honourable member for Wellington City to read. That was an "honourable" gentleman—he was referring to Sir Robert Stout—let there be no doubt about whom he was referring to. The whole and complete correspondence was in print four years ago, as he had just said, and it included, of course, the letter read to the House by the honourable member for Wellington City on the 20th July. Now, what took place in the House in 1889 in regard to the correspondence? When Sir Harry Atkinson laid the correspondence on the table of the House he (Mr. Fisher) made these remarks. He would read from *Hansard* of 1889, Volume 64, page 187, what transpired:—

"MR. FISHER.—I wish to ask you, Sir, as a point of order, whether it is permissible for the Hon. the Premier to send me a letter two hours ago, and then to ask permission to lay the whole of the correspondence on the table of the House without giving me any opportunity whatever of answering that letter."

That was the point of his complaint at that time—a serious and grievous complaint it was—that Sir Harry Atkinson laid the correspondence on the table, and therefore closed it finally without giving him any opportunity of answering the letter resurrected the other day by the member for Inangahua. Then he went on to say,—

"It would be more seemly and decorous of him to withdraw the papers now, and lay them on the table to-morrow at half-past two. Then, in the interim, I can give him an answer to the letter he has just forwarded to me. I think I ask the House to do nothing unfair in demanding that this correspondence should be this evening withdrawn, so that I may have time to send the honourable gentleman an answer to the letter I received to-day."

The most extraordinary part of the whole proceeding was this: For the first three weeks of the session of 1889 he sat in his seat, fixed and unmovable, waiting for the production of the correspondence. By a cunning device he was induced to leave his seat to go to the library to receive this particular letter which was addressed to him by Sir Harry Atkinson, and during his absence for a few moments from the House the whole correspondence was laid on the table at nine o'clock at night—a most unusual circumstance—instead of being laid on the table, as was the usual practice of the House, at half-past two in the afternoon; and, had it not been for the present Minister of Lands, Mr. John McKenzie, who informed him in the lobby of the trick that was being

played by laying the papers on the table at that unusual hour, he would have known nothing whatever of the intention to lay the correspondence on the table. He thanked that gentleman then, and he thanked him again now, for having informed him of the trick that was being resorted to. Then, when the correspondence was laid on the table, what happened? There was no motion made for printing it. Sir Harry Atkinson simply moved, That it do lie on the table. And this was what took place:—

"MR. FISHER.—Am I to understand that the papers are to be referred to the Printing Committee?"

"SIR H. A. ATKINSON.—No.

"MR. FISHER.—Then, I move, That the papers be referred to the Printing Committee."

On a division, the House carried his motion by a majority of three. Then the correspondence went to the Printing Committee, and he applied to the Committee, by letter, for leave to attend, in order to request that the papers should be printed. He attended the Committee. He made a speech of some duration. He laid before the Committee the fact that it was his strong desire that the correspondence should be printed. The Committee, in its wisdom, decided otherwise; but, in order to have some record of the proceedings of that day, he wrote to the Chairman of the Reporting Debates Committee asking him if he would certify that he had attended the meeting of the Committee, that he had made the request that the correspondence should be printed, and that the Committee decided adversely to him. The Chairman of the Committee, in reply, sent him this letter:—

"Wellington, 11th September, 1889.

"SIR,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your favour of yesterday, with reference to your attendance before the Reporting Debates and Printing Committee on the 9th July last, and in reply to state,—That, you having intimated a desire to attend and give evidence, you were invited to attend accordingly. Your evidence was not taken down in writing, but there is a rough minute to the effect of the statement in your letter contained; and as, moreover, I have a distinct recollection of what transpired, I beg to say that you mentioned as one of your reasons for desiring to be heard that a Customs employé named Jackman had made certain allegations against you, and that you desired that, in refutation of those allegations, your correspondence with the Premier should be printed.—I have, &c.,

"W. J. STEWARD,

"Chairman of Reporting Debates and Printing Committee.

"George Fisher, Esq., M.H.R."

Now, having regard to all the circumstances, so very serious as they were to him at the time, would it not have been only reasonable for the Committee to have assented to the printing of the correspondence? He thought that a reasonable request; but the Committee, by a large majority, voted against the printing. And who were the honourable gentlemen who

voted against him? He would read their names. Those who voted for the printing of the correspondence were Messrs. Feldwick and Moss. Those who voted against the printing were Sir Maurice O'Rorke, Messrs. Hislop, Whyte, Saunders, O'Connor, Lawry, and W. P. Reeves—a gentleman so closely connected with the authorship of the article which appeared that day. Ought not the person who was the writer of that villainous thing—that measureless liar—to be ashamed of such statements?

Mr. REEVES rose to a point of order. The honourable gentleman had called him a measureless liar.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No, he did not.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable gentleman stated distinctly he (Mr. Reeves) was closely connected with the authorship of the article, holding it up and stating that the author of the paragraph was a measureless liar.

Mr. FISHER said his assertion was that the author of that article was a measureless liar.

Mr. REEVES said he stated he (Mr. Reeves) was closely connected with it. He then stated the author was a measureless liar. If that was not calling him a measureless liar, he did not know what was.

Mr. SPEAKER said he understood the honourable gentleman had stated that the Minister was closely connected with the writing of the article, but he did not understand him to say of the Minister that he was a measureless liar.

Mr. REEVES rose to a point of order. The honourable gentleman stated he (Mr. Reeves) was closely connected with the authorship of that paragraph, and, brandishing it in his direction, he then stated that the author was a measureless liar. If that was not stating that he (Mr. Reeves) was a measureless liar, he did not understand the English language.

Mr. SPEAKER could not see that the honourable gentleman had called the Minister a measureless liar; but he (the Minister) was entitled to claim that the assertion made by the honourable gentleman that he was connected with the writing of the article should be withdrawn.

Mr. FISHER.—I withdraw it, Sir.

Mr. REEVES asked the Speaker to pardon him. He might allow him to explain. The honourable gentleman did not say that he was closely connected with any other person, but with the thing itself—with the authorship of that writing; it was not with a person; it must be the actual thing itself—that was to say, he was author of that paragraph: and then he stated that the author was a measureless liar, and let him come forth. If that was not, by insinuation, calling him a measureless liar, then he did not know what was.

Mr. SPEAKER said he would protect the honourable gentleman from any such suggestion, but he understood merely that the member for Wellington City had broadly stated that the honourable gentleman was connected with the article—not that he was the writer.

Mr. FISHER said, and again he repeated, this time without warmth or heat, that the

writer of that article was a measureless liar, and he said that in a calm, cool manner, and without excitement. Perhaps Mr. Speaker did not hear him read his own letter, which he would have much pleasure in laying on the table. He would ask Mr. Speaker to verify the statements in that letter.

Mr. SEDDON rose to a point of order, which was this: Could a member call upon the Chair, by holding up a letter, to verify the statements in that letter? Could the Speaker be called upon to answer a question about a letter which he wrote when he was Chairman of the Reporting Debates Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER said the Speaker could not be so called upon. His attention was diverted at the time, because an honourable member who was speaking to him at the chair was asking about another matter.

Mr. FISHER said here was the article which made these statements, which said there was before that House in 1889 a motion for the printing of this correspondence. He had read from the records to show there never was any such motion before the House. He then read a letter from the Chairman of the Reporting Debates Committee to show that he made application for leave to attend before the Reporting Debates Committee in order to prefer a request that the correspondence should be put into print, and here he had the Chairman's letter verifying the fact that he attended before the Committee, that he requested that the correspondence should be printed, and bearing out all the statements he made. He fortified himself in that position by the production of that letter. He would hand it to the *Hansard* reporters, and, if need be, lay it on the table. The Chairman's letter was an answer to this slanderer. He had shown, by reading from the records of the Reporting Debates Committee, who were the men who prevented the printing of that correspondence. And there sat one of them.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who is that?

Mr. FISHER.—The present Minister of Education, Mr. W. P. Reeves. Those who voted against the printing were Sir Maurice O'Rorke, Messrs. Hislop, Whyte, Saunders, O'Connor, Lawry, and W. P. Reeves. And with that knowledge—with the knowledge of that historic fact before him—the honourable gentleman allowed to appear in a paper with which he was prominently connected a villainous statement of that kind. What had the honourable gentleman to say to that? And now the letter read to the House a few evenings ago by the member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) was produced as being something entirely new. He had shown the connection of the member for Inangahua with the digging-up of this correspondence; and the impression conveyed, he found, not only amongst some members, but amongst some of the public, was that this letter had never before seen the light of day, that it had been smuggled away in some dark recess, that it had been mysteriously unearthed,—dug up—and that the public were for the first time informed of the contents of that letter. Now,

as he had already mentioned, here was the correspondence in print in official form—for it was already in print, ready to be bound up in the official records of the House—and it rested with the Committee to say whether it should be placed amongst the Appendices or not; and what did the Minister of Education say? "No." It could not be objected to on the score of the cost of printing, for there it was already in print; yet they ordered the type to be broken up. The cost of printing had been already incurred, including the letter dug up by the honourable member for Inangahua and read by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean); yet the Minister of Education voted that it should not go forth to the public. That was not his (Mr. Fisher's) only strong point in regard to the existence of the correspondence. Here it was, as he had said, published in the *New Zealand Times* four years ago—occupying four whole pages of the *New Zealand Times*—and there was this letter, which was supposed to be something entirely new, and which it was hinted had seen the light of day for the first time. He could not lay this heavy document on the table (the file of the *New Zealand Times*), but he had a spare copy of the paper of the 5th July, 1889, and he would lay it on the table. He would do one of two things: he would either now read the letter entire, or he would ask the permission of the House to allow him to put it in *Hansard*. It appeared in the *New Zealand Times* on the 5th July, 1889. If the House allowed him to put it in *Hansard* as something not new, but something which, he had shown, had already been printed in that newspaper on the 5th July, 1889, he would not detain the House by reading it. Might he hand it to the *Hansard* reporters?

Hon. MEMBERS.—Read it.

MR. FISHER said he did not want to take up time by reading it, but would hand it in. Here was the letter read to the House by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) on the 20th July, as it appeared printed in full in the *New Zealand Times* of the 5th July, 1889. He had no dread of the reproduction now of a letter which had been published to the world four years ago:—

"Premier's Office,

"Wellington, 3rd July, 1889.

"SIR,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 31st May, which has remained hitherto unanswered, because my time has been fully occupied with preparing for the meeting of Parliament.

"While admitting the truth of none of the many grave charges and insinuations against myself and others with which your letter abounds, I propose, nevertheless, to deal very summarily with a few of them, which may be taken, both in relevancy and truthfulness, as fairly typical of them all.

"First, as to what you say about Mr. Jackman. Your statement that from the 7th of March he was 'in daily direct communication with the Premier,' and 'became almost his

confidential adviser,' is simply untrue. Mr. Jackman has given me no advice whatever, and has had no communication with me of any kind in connection with the Junction Brewery (Gilmer's) cases. Indeed, I have only spoken to him once in my life, and that was in Mr. Glasgow's presence, when he appealed against your action in suspending him. I may go further and say that nothing that Mr. Jackman has ever done, said, or written has in any way influenced me or any of your late colleagues in our opinion as to your official conduct.

"Secondly, as to your remarks about Mr. Macarthy. You speak of him as having been practically installed as Commissioner of Customs in your absence, and as having taken upon him the part of official informer to the Government and confidential adviser to myself all through these brewery prosecutions. These assertions, which it would be charitable to call reckless, and which you make no pretence of supporting by any evidence whatever, are all untrue. Mr. Macarthy, so far as I am aware, never was in the Commissioner's office, and certainly in no sense ever had any authority there; nor did he give any advice or information to me or any other member of the Government with respect to the Junction Brewery cases. What he did was, at a chance meeting on the wharf, to offer to give me information of a general character after all the prosecutions should have been disposed of, with a view to enabling us to amend the Act and prevent similar frauds in the future; and of this promise I informed you in my telegram from Wanganui on the 5th March. This was an offer of a strictly honourable and straightforward character, and it expressly excluded the giving of information as to any of the cases then pending, or, indeed, as to any individual cases at all. Your insinuations as to my friendship with Mr. Macarthy are equally baseless. He is not, I hope, my enemy, but a man cannot be called my friend and confidential adviser when I have not spoken to him, I believe, a dozen times in my life, and certainly not more than two or three times within the last two years.

"Thirdly, your assertion that I inspired certain articles in the *Evening Press* and *New Zealand Times* is also untrue. I did not write any of the articles referred to; I did not authorise the writing of them; I did not, either directly or indirectly, supply either of those papers with the information upon which the articles were based.

"Fourthly, you assert that your portfolio was offered in March to Mr. J. B. Whyte. This is untrue. Mr. Whyte has never had such an offer, either directly or indirectly, and no one has ever been authorised to make such an offer.

"I now turn to the real matter in dispute—your conduct as Commissioner of Customs with regard to the brewery prosecutions. You continue to speak of them as a 'trumpet' matter, and I must refer you to my letter of the 23rd April for an explanation of how, 'trumpet' as

they perhaps were in themselves, they nevertheless raised an issue of the gravest importance. It is surely childish on your part to insist that a Ministry would not be impeached for the mere 'omission on the part of a brewer to enter fifty sacks of malt in his books.' The question at issue between us, as you know very well, is not as to the conduct of any brewer, but as to the conduct of Mr. Fisher at the time when he was a Minister of the Crown. The question is simply, whether, a certain brewer having been guilty of an offence against the law, you did or did not, from improper motives, interfere as Commissioner of Customs with the ordinary course of the law in order to screen the offender from prosecution. I must speak plainly. Your colleagues were and are of opinion that you had been guilty of such an interference, and that they would have been justly stigmatized as dishonourable themselves if they had sanctioned your conduct or retained you as a colleague. It was for this reason, and this reason only, that you were asked to resign; and I repeat what I said in my letter of the 23rd April—that, previously to your action in the brewery prosecutions, not one of us had ever thought of your resignation as possible or desirable.

"Before entering into the details of the Junction Brewery cases, I will briefly dispose of the argument which you base upon the treatment of Staples's Brewery for what you call worse offences. Here, for once, the main facts are not in dispute. We both admit that the irregularities of Staples's Brewery were discovered and disposed of about two months before anything was known as to those of Hamilton, Gilmer, or Edmonds, and that they were settled by the permanent officers of your department, on their being satisfied that there had been no fraud, without the knowledge of yourself or any other Minister. Now, we probably both agree that this was not right; and I, at any rate, showed my opinion about it by giving directions, as soon as the facts came to my knowledge, that such a course must never be allowed again, and that all cases must in future be at once referred to the Commissioner. But what is the argument which you found upon this improper settlement of the Staples's Brewery case? Simply this: Because, without the knowledge of Ministers, the Government officers of the department had, believing there was no fraud in Staples's case, settled it out of Court, that therefore Ministers were not to prosecute in a case which was brought before them in which fraud was admitted, and which the Crown Solicitor told you was a bad case, and must be prosecuted.

"I could, and, if it should appear to be necessary, I will, follow you through the vast mass of untrue or irrelevant assertions, denials, and insinuations in connection with the brewery prosecutions and other matters contained in your last letter, and I have a complete answer in each case. But this is not now necessary, as you have announced your desire to have a Committee of the House, to whom the essential facts will, of course, be

stated. Instead, therefore, of doing this now, let me recall your attention to a bare statement, in chronological order, of the main facts of the Junction Brewery case as admitted by yourself:—

"1. You admit that during your absence from Wellington it was decided to prosecute Edmonds's, Hamilton's, and the Junction Breweries for frauds under the Beer Duty Act.

"2. You admit that early in December, on your return from Melbourne, you received at Invercargill a telegram from a 'constituent' (whose name you unfortunately do not mention), and that as a result of that telegram you directed Mr. McKellar not to proceed with the prosecution of one of the three cases mentioned above—namely, that of the Junction Brewery.

"3. You admit that shortly afterwards you received a telegram from Mr. Hislop upon the subject, urging that proceedings should go on; that you telegraphed your assent; and that on your return to Wellington you confirmed it.

"4. You admit that on the 17th December you had an interview with Mr. Bell, the Crown Solicitor; that, as a result of that interview, a letter was written by Mr. Bell on the following day, recommending that no information should be laid against the Junction Brewery 'until after the cases against Hamilton and Edmonds have been disposed of on Friday,' in which recommendation you concurred.

"(I may here pause to remind you that, in that interview with Mr. Bell, you were Commissioner of Customs and he was Crown Solicitor, two public officers consulting as to your official duty. Yet, though charged with having acted at that interview in dereliction of your public duty, and challenged to disclose what then occurred, you not only refuse to do this, but, while posing as an innocent man suffering under a grievous imputation, you refuse to allow Mr. Bell to divulge what then passed, and thus seal the lips of the one witness who, on your own hypothesis, could establish your innocence.)

"5. You admit that by the 23rd February the cases of Edmonds and Hamilton had been disposed of; that the Acting-Secretary of Customs at once applied to you for leave to proceed with the prosecution of the Junction Brewery; and that you replied that 'there was no need for precipitancy in the matter.' Here, again, on your own admission, it was you who stopped the prosecution.

"6. You admit that you had not removed your interdict against proceedings up to the 4th March, which you now allege you then thought was the last day on which the information could be laid; that on that day you summoned a meeting of the Cabinet at half-past two p.m., and tried to induce it to allow you to settle the matter out of Court; that the Cabinet refused your request, and decided to prosecute; and that, when you then sent to inquire whether the information could be laid, you found that it was too late, as the office of the Court was closed.

"7. You admit that, though the matter had been on your hands since December, you made

Mr. Fisher

no attempt to consult the Premier upon the subject until twenty minutes to eight p.m. on the 4th March: that is, some hours after the time within which the information must be laid had, as you now allege you then thought, expired.

"8. You admit that you sent a telegram to the Premier on the 4th March, with the object of inducing him to sanction the settlement of the case out of Court; that the statement of the facts you relied on was incorrect in an essential particular; and that you also omitted to mention in that telegram that the Cabinet had that very day refused to allow such a settlement out of Court, and had decided to prosecute.

"9. You admit that on the 5th of March the Premier replied to your telegram that the information should be laid that day, but that no information was laid.

"(I may add here—what is an indisputable fact, though you have not, so far as I know, admitted it—that if the information had been laid that day it would have been in time, and the cases would not have lapsed.)

"The indictment which I have thus constructed out of your own admissions is one which needs no elaboration to heighten its effect. It proves beyond a possibility of doubt that you have been guilty in your official capacity of a deliberate, persistent, and in part successful attempt to interfere with the ordinary course of the law on behalf of a particular offender, and that you did your utmost to be faithful to the promise which, as you told more than one Minister, you had made—that he should be allowed a lenient settlement out of Court on payment of a small sum, instead of being subjected to the 'harassing proceedings of the law.'

"I deeply regret having to write thus of one once trusted with perfect confidence, and deemed worthy of it, but your grave disloyalty to your colleagues, to the high trust reposed in you as a Minister of the Crown, and to that unwritten law without which parliamentary government would be impossible, has left me no alternative.

"H. A. ATKINSON.

"G. Fisher, Esq., M.H.R., Wellington."

Looking back, after these long years, he marvelled at his own moderation in suppressing his indignation when he found himself, by a trick, shut out from answering that letter. And having now again read it to the House, he would repeat, for the information of honest and honourable men, the mild protest he made when he found the correspondence had been laid on the table, after he had been tricked into leaving his place in the House for only a few minutes. The protest was as follows:—

"MR. FISHER.—I wish to ask you, Sir, as a point of order, whether it is permissible for the Hon. the Premier to send me a letter two hours ago, and then to ask permission to lay the whole of the correspondence on the table of the House without giving me any opportunity whatever of answering that letter. It

would be more seemly and decorous of him to withdraw the papers now, and lay them on the table to-morrow at half-past two. Then, in the interim, I can give him an answer to the letter he has just forwarded to me. I think I ask the House to do nothing unfair in demanding that this correspondence should be this evening withdrawn, so that I may have time to send the honourable gentleman an answer to the letter I received to-day."

He had shown that he was debarred from answering that letter by a discreditable and dishonourable trick. He had shown that the correspondence existed complete, and was printed complete in the *New Zealand Times* of the 5th July, 1889. He trusted the House would excuse him if he dwelt upon this question; but, happily for him, he had preserved Mr. Speaker's letter, and his request to have the correspondence printed four years ago. Some honourable members might think his action unnecessary, but he thought it was necessary for his own protection that that letter should be published. He had nothing to fear. If his personal feelings had been consulted he would rather the correspondence had not been revived. He knew of no reason for its revival. But these were the cunning and contemptible ways of Sir Robert Stout. The article said,—

"How much better it would have been to have had the whole correspondence printed at the time, he now probably realises. In these matters publicity is the best policy. Whatever advantage is gained by covering up is invariably lost by unlooked-for exposure."

He hoped he had thoroughly exposed the falsity and the hypocrisy of that statement. He had thoroughly exposed the exposé. He would like to ask honourable members who were possessed of any of the finer feelings whether, in the position in which he stood, he had not a just cause of complaint. He thought there ought to be a feeling of honour amongst honourable members sufficiently strong to insure that a man should not be reviled in this way; that, having passed through a crucial and a painful period of his existence, matters should not be dragged up from the bowels of the earth in that way. He had nothing further to say. He had to thank the House for its patience in listening to his remarks, and he hoped the House would agree with him that it was necessary, in vindication of his own reputation, that he should have taken the step which he had that day taken.

Mr. O'CONNOR said the honourable member had referred to what had taken place at a meeting of a former Reporting Debates Committee, and laid stress on the fact that the Committee did not order the correspondence to be printed. At that time it was a question with the Committee whether they would publish the whole correspondence or not. There was no question of the correspondence being printed in part; and the Committee rightly considered that it was a matter which the country might very well be spared the publication of: that was the opinion of the Committee

at that time. Some members of the Committee desired to print the correspondence, but the majority thought as he had stated; and he felt assured of this: that, if at that time any portion of the correspondence had been printed, then the Committee would have agreed, and decided, that the whole should be published. He thought the honourable gentleman himself ought to have said that in his remarks.

Mr. REEVES did not rise to go into this question at all, except to say two things. One was with regard to the action of the Reporting Debates Committee some years ago. He could not remember whether the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) wanted the correspondence published or not. He had not the least idea. But what he did remember was that, whatever the general opinion of the House was as to the Committee not publishing the correspondence, the opinion which he had was that the honourable gentleman had suffered very much, and that he had expiated—to use a common expression of the honourable gentleman himself—that he had expiated his offence by the suffering, humiliation, and degradation he had gone through. The feeling was that the Committee was doing him a kindness in not printing the correspondence. He (Mr. Reeves) voted against the printing of the correspondence, as far as he could remember, simply for that reason. Now, as regarded the paragraph in the *New Zealand Times*, he would say, absolutely and distinctly, that all he knew of the paragraph was that he had read it in the paper that morning. He neither had anything to do with it appearing—directly or indirectly—nor had he any opportunity of interfering with its appearance. Whether it was parliamentary to allow a member to charge another member with allowing a villainous thing to appear in print, he did not know. He supposed, as Mr. Speaker passed it, that it was parliamentary. He did not know whether it was parliamentary that a member should be allowed to say that a brother member was closely connected with the authorship of a paragraph, and that the author of that paragraph was a measureless liar.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had called on the honourable member to withdraw that expression.

Mr. REEVES said Yes; but whether it was allowable after saying what the honourable member said, and then distinctly suggesting that a member was closely connected with the authorship, and saying that the author was a measureless liar—whether that did not amount to a distinct suggestion against the member, he would leave to the common-sense of the House and the people of New Zealand to judge. He must not refer to such an expression as unparliamentary in future.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was now reflecting on the Chair. He had called upon the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) to withdraw the words which connected the honourable gentleman with his statement regarding the authorship of the article; and the honourable gentleman

man withdrew the words, so that those words practically did not exist. Therefore there was no charge as far as the honourable gentleman was concerned connecting him with the article in question.

Mr. REEVES said he was simply referring now to the words used in the debate.

Mr. SEDDON said the words had been withdrawn.

Mr. REEVES said the subsequent expression, "measureless liar," was unquestionably connected with the previous expression, and the connection was never withdrawn; and it amounted to the grossest charge which the English language allowed one man to make against another.

Mr. SPEAKER would point out again that the words connecting the honourable gentleman with the words complained of had been withdrawn.

Mr. SEDDON said the words "measureless liar" were withdrawn, but not the connection referred to by his honourable colleague.

Mr. SPEAKER said the words "measureless liar" were used in regard to the anonymous writer of an article, and, as he had said, the words connecting the Minister with the expression complained of had been withdrawn.

Mr. REEVES said, if he were to say that a member of that House—say, the honourable member for the Hutt, who was, he supposed, most unlikely to do such a thing—had written a certain article, or was connected with the writing of it, and if the honourable member said he did not write it, and the denial was accepted, could it be said that no wrong was done in connecting him with it?

Mr. BUCHANAN said Mr. Speaker had pointed out that the withdrawal of the words had cleared the honourable gentleman opposite.

Mr. REEVES said he was not disputing the Speaker's ruling.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable gentleman ought to be satisfied with that.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had stated distinctly that the honourable gentleman had withdrawn the words connecting the Minister with the statement.

Mr. REEVES said he was not disputing Mr. Speaker's ruling. On the contrary, he said Mr. Speaker had laid down a rule, and that therefore it was parliamentary procedure. He had merely pointed out the facts, and what the facts were in regard to himself, and, in doing that, he thought he was within his parliamentary privilege, and ought not to be interrupted. Having said that, he would not prolong the discussion, except to repeat that neither directly nor indirectly had he anything to do with the paragraph in question, nor had he any possible means of preventing that paragraph from appearing, seeing that he had had no indication from anybody that it would appear.

Mr. FISHER would once more thank the House for having given him the opportunity of setting himself right in this matter. He regretted as much as any man the revival of an unpleasant past—no man more regretted it

Mr. O'Connor

than he did; but when they found themselves surrounded by parliamentary Thugs—persons who dug up from the grave correspondence of that character, which, as he had said, every man should endeavour to forget, and he, for one, would much rather have forgotten it—he was sure that, however unpleasant the matter might be, he was at least entitled to ask—

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words be taken down. Was it allowable that one honourable member should accuse another honourable member of being a parliamentary Thug?

Mr. SPEAKER said he was not aware that the honourable gentleman had used such an expression.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) did use it; and he would move, That the words be taken down, or, at any rate, that the words be withdrawn. The honourable member had referred to the honourable member for Inangahua and the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) in the terms he had stated.

Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentleman was putting a strained interpretation on what he said.

Mr. SPEAKER.—What did the honourable gentleman say?

Mr. FISHER said it was so long ago now that he could not exactly say. The honourable gentleman should have objected to the words at the time.

Mr. SPEAKER said his attention had been called to the alleged fact that the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) had used the expression “parliamentary Thugs” as applied to certain members of the House. If that was so, the honourable member must withdraw the words.

Mr. FISHER would withdraw the expression. He would only make one remark with regard to the observations of the Minister of Education as to his action upon the Reporting Debates Committee in 1889. He would not accept from that honourable gentleman any expression of commiseration. He would at all times decline to accept anything from that honourable gentleman; and when the honourable gentleman said that it was out of a feeling of kindness that he voted against the printing of the papers, because of his (Mr. Fisher's) humiliation and degradation, he had to answer that he had always lived, and hoped always to be able to live, superior to the honourable gentleman and his canting hypocrisy. The honourable gentleman mistook him very greatly if he supposed he was a man who would lie down under insult, and allow other men to walk over him. He was not made that way. What he did feel at the time was that he had passed through an exceedingly painful experience, and he now felt that, as he had been assailed in many ways, it was only due to himself that the correspondence in its complete form should be printed; and the House had done him the justice to agree to that. It was the action of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) and the honourable member for Inangahua that he objected to; in

having acted as they had done; and he lived in the confident belief that the character of the honourable member for Inangahua, however well it might be understood at the present time, would be yet better understood by the people of this country. His (Mr. Fisher's) character was as open as the day. Having said so much about this matter, he now laid on the table this correspondence in the form in which it was officially printed in the year 1889, and in the form in which it was reproduced in the *New Zealand Times* in that year, including, in both forms, the letter which had been read by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean).

Motion for adjournment negatived.

Mr. SEDDON submitted that it was not within the power of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) to proceed to the table of the House and lay the correspondence upon it, as he had just now done, after a declaration to that effect. He should move for leave to do so in the ordinary way.

Mr. SPEAKER said the papers were not, in a parliamentary sense, upon the table at all. If the honourable gentleman wished to lay them on the table he must do so in a proper manner. He must ask and obtain the leave of the House to lay them there.

Mr. FISHER said he had already relieved the Premier of his dreadful state of perturbation by removing the papers.

SHEEP-SHEARS.

Mr. BUICK (on behalf of the member for Waimate), asked the Colonial Treasurer whether it is not in his power as Commissioner of Customs to declare sheep-shears to be artificers' tools; and, if so, will he so declare, so that these articles, which are tools of trade, may be admitted duty-free?

Mr. WARD might inform the honourable member that what he suggested could not be done.

NORTH CANTERBURY BOARD OF EDUCATION.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Education, When there is a probability of the North Canterbury Board of Education being informed of the amount that will be available for school-building purposes during the current year? He need not remind the Minister of Education that there was a very large number of tradesmen out of work, especially in and around Christchurch, and it was very desirable that the Education Board should know as speedily as possible what amount of money would be available for building purposes, in order that they might enter into contracts, which, at any rate, would relieve the labour-market of the state of congestion which he had just indicated.

Mr. REEVES had to say, in reply, that as soon as the House voted the sum which the House would permit to be allocated for school-buildings he would know what would be the sum available this year, and, as soon as he

knew that, he would take steps to let the Board know.

N. FRYDAY.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Premier, When he will lay before this House the report and evidence of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the case of Mr. N. Fryday?

Mr. SEDDON thought the honourable member might first of all ask the question, Will the Government lay the report and evidence referred to upon the table? The honourable gentleman assumed that they had agreed to do this, and asked when they were going to do it. It had not been ordered by the House, and he did not know that the Government was called on to answer the question at all.

Mr. HAMLIN thanked the honourable gentleman, and said he would put the question in another way.

IMPERIAL-GUARANTEED DEBENTURES.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Colonial Treasurer, There having been no correspondence between the Government and the Agent-General on the subject of the guaranteed debentures, as shown by the "Nil" return No. 186H, laid upon the table of the House on the 15th August: (1) With whom the Government corresponded, and by whom was it advised, in respect of the 4-per-cent. Imperial-guaranteed debentures recently converted and amounting to £252,807; also (2), for what reasons was such conversion of Imperial-guaranteed debentures (having twenty-two years' currency) sanctioned by the Government; (3) on what terms was such conversion effected; and (4) has the balance of these £500,000 4-per-cent. guaranteed debentures, 1868, been converted, or is it now in process of conversion, or has its conversion been sanctioned? The question fairly set out what he wished to know, so that it did not require much explanation. The last quarter's returns showed that part of the guaranteed debentures of 1868 had been converted, and it was desirable to know by whose advice, and for what reasons, that had been done. Then, with the Imperial guarantee, and the long currency, it was certain that a large premium must have been paid to obtain them. He therefore asked the Colonial Treasurer to kindly answer the question as put under the several headings.

Mr. WARD said the only return referred to in the question put by the honourable member related to correspondence connected with guaranteed debentures issued under the Immigration and Public Works Loan Act of 1870. Questions Nos. (1) and (4) referred to the guaranteed debentures issued under the New Zealand Loan Act of 1863, and concerning the conversion of which correspondence was now in the hands of the Printer, and would be ready shortly, and be placed on the table of the House.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked, would the Colonial Treasurer answer Nos. (3) and (4)?

Mr. WARD said that the whole of the information the honourable gentleman asked for

would be given in the correspondence to which he referred.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the information given in that way might come to hand too late to be of use. He thought his question was a fair question, and that he was entitled to an answer.

Mr. WARD said the correspondence was now in the hands of the Printer, and as soon as it was ready it would be placed on the table. In order to answer the question he required to be certain of every detail. He did not think he should be called on to answer it in detail. As soon as the correspondence was received from the Printer it would be laid on the table. That did not mean delay.

Mr. RICHARDSON wished to know if he was to understand that the Colonial Treasurer was unable, or that he was unwilling, to answer the question.

Mr. WARD said the honourable gentleman was responsible for his own understanding; he (Mr. Ward) was not.

RAILWAY SALOON-CARRIAGES.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, Will he obtain from the Railway Commissioners a photograph of one of the new saloon-carriages recently built at the Government railway shops, and place the same in the lobby of the House; and will the Minister indicate whether all the materials of construction of such carriages were of New Zealand manufacture; and will the Premier also state whether such carriages cost the colony a greater or lesser amount than would be paid for similar class and style of carriages imported from England or America?

Mr. REEVES said the Railway Commissioners would be communicated with on the subject.

TARANAKI HIGHWAYMAN.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Government, If they are aware that, after the Magistrate at New Plymouth had passed a sentence of seven days' solitary confinement on bread and water on the now notorious Taranaki highwayman Wallath, for breaking out of the insecure prison-yard at New Plymouth, the Gaoler asked the said Magistrate to revise the sentence and put the said prisoner in irons, so that he could more easily retain him in safe custody? The reason he asked this question was this: Some of the people at New Plymouth the other day drew his attention to this case, and asked him to bring it under the notice of the Government, believing the time had not arrived when they should resort to such a state of affairs as prevailed in Russia.

Mr. REEVES said, No, the Government were not aware of what was stated in the question; but he had to assure the honourable member that he was apparently under a misapprehension in regard to the way in which prisoners of a certain class were treated. So far from its being an unknown thing to put prison-breakers in irons in New Zealand, it was the usual practice, and it was done in pursuance

Mr. Reeves

of section 7 of the Prisons Act Amendment Act of 1888. But, as he said, he was not aware it had been done in this case, and he would ask and see.

WANGANUI HOSPITAL ATTENDANT.

Mr. WILLIS asked the Minister of Justice, Whether it has been brought under his notice that a male attendant of the Wanganui Hospital named Tarrant, who made certain charges against one of the female nurses of grave misconduct, was dismissed, notwithstanding that such charge was found, after inquiry by Dr. MacGregor, to be correct? In asking this question he would like to state the circumstances which surrounded the matter. Some time ago in the Wanganui Hospital a certain case came to the notice of an attendant in charge—a man named Tarrant—of immorality occurring in the building. As soon as Tarrant became aware of the facts he communicated with the Hospital authorities, and an inquiry was held by the Board, and a decision was come to to the effect that there was not sufficient ground to justify the case proceeding further. At the time this created a very strong feeling in Wanganui that the case had not been properly dealt with, and that further action was necessary. Certain letters were published, and this man Tarrant was dismissed from the Hospital on the ground that if he were not so dismissed the matron and other attendants belonging to the Hospital would leave it. A deputation waited on the Minister of Justice with the request that he would cause an inquiry to be made into the circumstances. The result of that inquiry was that Dr. MacGregor reported that there had been a case of immorality, and that, substantially, the charges made by this man were correct. For making those charges, that man, who had strictly done his duty—he had been in the Hospital for a period of seven years, and had an excellent character and good testimonials—was summarily dismissed, simply because the other attendants connected with the Hospital—

Captain RUSSELL rose to a point of order. This was a very grave charge that the honourable gentleman was making.

Mr. WILLIS said the charge had been sustained.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was making a statement as to the facts upon which his question was founded. If there was any doubt about the facts, then the honourable gentleman was introducing debatable matter, and was not entitled to proceed.

Mr. WILLIS said the statement was made to him by Dr. MacGregor himself two days previously that the charge of immorality had been sustained, and that, although in the report it was stated as an impropriety, he meant immorality. These were his exact words.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman would not be entitled to debate the question except on a motion for the adjournment of the House. He could only explain his question.

Mr. WILLIS was not going any further. Those were the simple facts of the case, and he thought, in the interests of justice, there should be a satisfactory reply to the question.

Mr. REEVES said that, as the honourable gentleman was aware, he promised the deputation that he would send Dr. MacGregor to the Wanganui Hospital to inquire into this charge of immorality or misconduct against a certain servant of the Hospital. Dr. MacGregor, in due course, sent in a report, and the report virtually was that the charge of impropriety had been sustained. He also informed him (Mr. Reeves) that the person so charged had left the Hospital, and also her situation. Under the circumstances, he did not see any use in pursuing the matter so far as she was concerned. He was exceedingly sorry for the poor creature, and he did not see any use in going on hunting her down in any way. As regarded the position of the Chairman and members of the Board, he was not called on, of course, to pass any opinion on that, nor was he in a position to do so. All he knew was that the man who made the accusation had been dismissed from the Hospital. That was true, as the honourable gentleman had stated. He had also been told that it was strenuously denied that his dismissal had anything to do with his action in this matter. That was all he knew of the case.

MANGAMUKA HOTEL.

Mr. KAPA asked the Minister in Charge of Native Affairs, Whether the Government have received a petition from certain Ngapuhi chiefs in the Hokianga district, protesting against the opening of a hotel at Mangamuka, it being a Native district, and the Maoris there being opposed to the sale of spirituous liquors? He put his question in consequence of having received a number of letters from the Natives in the Hokianga district protesting against the issue of a license in their district. The Natives said that some time ago, about the 20th July, they sent a petition to the Government on the subject. The petition was signed by some fifty-two Natives, and they pointed out that it was purely a Native district, that there were only two European houses in it, and that they protested against a license for a hotel being granted there. Perhaps the Government were in possession of the facts in connection with the issue of this license, which was granted on the 1st of July. He hoped the Government would accede to the prayer of the petition and refuse to issue the license, because it was purely a Native district, and it would not be to the advantage of the Natives that liquors had been sold there.

Mr. REEVES said the Government entirely sympathized with any effort made by the Natives to prevent the issue of licenses to houses in their districts. He might say that the petition had been received, and had been forwarded to the Resident Magistrate for his report, which had not yet been received. At the same time he did not see at present how the Government could interfere, because the license was issued by the Licensing Committee.

WAIROA ROADS.

Captain RUSSELL asked the Minister of Lands, if he will place on the supplementary estimates a sum of money to aid the settlers in Wairoa County to open up the line of road surveyed by Captain Turner, and thereby add materially to the value of large areas of Crown lands still unsold in the district? Some little time ago the Minister of Lands led him to hope that something would be done in this matter. Since then the ratepayers in the district had decided to raise a loan for a bridge over the river; and he was informed by the local authorities that 82,000 acres of Crown lands would be benefited by the construction of the road. Communication by wheel at present was almost impossible, but if the Government would give a sum towards the work the road would be formed as far as Mohaka, and the cost of the road would be more than recouped by the enhanced value of the land.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the subject was under the consideration of the Government, and they hoped to be able to do something in the matter.

C. J. RUSSELL.

Mr. SANDFORD asked the Minister of Justice,—(1.) Whether he is aware that some three thousand residents of Christchurch and vicinity have petitioned the Governor in Council for certain relief to Charles James Russell, medical practitioner, of Christchurch? (2.) Will the Minister inform the House whether the petitions have been considered and replies sent to the petitioners?

Mr. REEVES replied that Mr. Russell had been informed that his name could not be registered, inasmuch as there was no provision in the Act by which a medical officer could be reinstated whose name had been erased in the way Mr. Russell's had been.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS BILL.

Sir J. HALL rose to a point of order. A Bill had been introduced by the Government which would make it compulsory for endowed schools, which had endowments out of public money, to spend a specified sum in scholarships. Amongst those schools was included one which had been established by the Canterbury Association—namely, Christ's College, Christchurch. He wished to know whether this was not, strictly speaking, a private Bill, seeing that it dealt with the property of a college founded by the Canterbury Association, and which was endowed with a certain proportion of the proceeds of land by the settlers of Canterbury. He had learned from a communication from the Christ's College authorities that this Bill, which affected them so much, had been introduced without their knowledge, and that they had never seen a copy of it until he sent one down. Such a course, he thought, was highly improper. He would ask Mr. Speaker to say, not immediately, but after consideration, whether it was not a private Bill.

Mr. REEVES, while admitting that the honourable gentleman had a perfect right to

raise a point of order, did not admit that he had a right, under cover of raising that point of order, to make charges of improper conduct against the Government. He thought that was a gross breach of order, and would ask Mr. Speaker's ruling on the subject.

Sir J. HALL thought the honourable gentleman was right, and would withdraw what he had said in that respect.

Mr. SPEAKER said, with regard to the status of the Bill, he had not looked at clause 2 until now, but there appeared to be some ground for the position taken up by the honourable member for Ellesmere. He would look into the matter, and would give his decision on the next sitting-day, and if he were them in doubt he would take the usual course of referring the Bill to the Joint Committee.

Mr. REEVES said, had it been intended to push the Bill on immediately after its introduction, steps would have been taken to give warning to the Christ's College authorities. He might say he also had received a letter from those authorities on the subject, and therefore they were thoroughly informed on the matter. The nature of the Bill had also been published in the newspapers, so that the authorities of the College must be fully acquainted with what was being done. The Bill had been printed and circulated for some little time, and there had been no undue haste in pushing it on. He would be quite satisfied if the Bill came up and was dealt with in the ordinary course.

Mr. RHODES asked whether the Minister of Education had sent copies of the Bill to all secondary schools.

Mr. REEVES thought they all knew of it, but he would look into the matter.

DEFENCE.

Captain RUSSELL asked what steps the Government intended to take with regard to Colonel Fox's report, and when the House would have an opportunity of discussing it.

Mr. SEDDON said he thought of proposing certain resolutions to the House, and fixing a time for their consideration. It might possibly be next week.

NEW ZEALAND INSTITUTE BILL.

Mr. SEDDON moved for leave to introduce this Bill.

Sir J. HALL said it was not usual to discuss leave to introduce a Bill, but there were so many Bills on the Order Paper at this period of the session that he thought the Premier should give some idea of the contents of the Bill that he now proposed to introduce, and whether the Government seriously contemplated the passing of it. In view of the expression of opinion that had been given on this particular subject the other evening, he thought they had a right to ask what the Premier really intended.

Mr. SEDDON said it was the wish of the Government to economize as far as practicable, and they thought economy could be practised in respect to this Institute. It was on the

score of economy that they intended to legislate on the subject.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read a first time.

BETTERMENTS BILL.

Mr. SEDDON moved for leave to introduce this Bill.

Sir J. HALL wished to point out that what was understood by the term "betterment" involved a very large principle indeed, and one which was far-reaching, affecting all land benefited by public works. He presumed this Bill would embody that principle, and seek to put it in force in the colony. He thought the bringing-forward of a proposal of this kind at the present stage of the session deserved consideration. What was the position in which they found themselves? Two months out of the usual three for which a session generally lasted were over, and what was the amount of work before them? There were on the Order Paper eighty-eight Bills, most of which had not yet been read a second time, including many important measures which would create considerable discussion. With regard to the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill, down for this evening, he thought there must be some mistake, for surely the Premier could not expect them to discuss the second reading of a Bill which was only put into their hands the previous evening. In addition to these eighty-eight Bills, there were five of which the Colonial Treasurer had given notice that afternoon, there were seven before the Legislative Council, and eight or ten before Select Committees. They were therefore in the position that, being already in the third month of the session, there were more than one hundred Bills before Parliament, and the Minister proposed to introduce another, involving a principle which must arouse very considerable discussion. He said, without wishing to be offensive, that it was an absolute farce to introduce a Bill of that kind at this stage of the session. Ministers did not expect, they did not dream, they did not want to carry Bills of that kind; they simply wanted a few electioneering cries with which to go to the elections and say, "Here are Bills which would have been passed but for a factious and obstructive Opposition." It was, as he had said, an absolute farce to bring in Bills of this kind at this period of the session: but, of course, the Premier had an obedient majority at his back who would support him. If it were of any use at all he would take a division on the subject, and ask the House to say whether they were not tired of the Government introducing Bills which they had no intention of passing into law.

Mr. SEDDON said he had never known exception taken before to a Government placing before the House and the people legislation which they considered to be necessary for the good of the country, and the honourable gentleman was objecting before he had seen the Bill and without knowing its contents. In the absence of the nominal leader of the Opposition they had now to the front the real leader of the Opposition, and he was disclosing to

the House and to the country what the tactics of the Opposition had been—one, that no business should be proceeded with; and two, that the Government should not have the right of introducing necessary legislation. The honourable gentleman said, "at this stage of the session." For two months afternoon after afternoon had been taken up by honourable members, some of whom were not controlled by the honourable gentleman; and they had had desultory debates on the adjournment of the House. They had got the Financial Statement through, and one or two matters of some importance—the Electoral Bill, for instance, which the Government insisted upon having carried through; and now, when it came to necessary legislation, which the country had been told of their intention to introduce—it had been foreshadowed in the Speech from the Throne—they were told they had no right to introduce it. He said they had a right to take the country into their confidence and the House into their confidence. If this measure had been passed years ago it would have been a good thing for the country. It would have stopped large borrowing; it would have stopped the enhancing of the value of large estates to the detriment of the country and to the profit of the owners. It was a Bill upon which the Government laid a great deal of stress. If they were to stop the cry for borrowing the Government said a portion of the increment of properties which would improve in value by the construction of public works should come to the people. He took this opportunity of protesting emphatically against the course proposed. Members were now paid so much a year, and the country had a right to demand their services so long as there was work for them to do. It might suit the Opposition to talk about being now in the second month of the session, and preparing for going home; they would say afterwards, "There is the result of your payment of members. They receive £240, and what work do they do? No laws have been passed. It means this: The Government simply want to bring them there; the Government are responsible for the waste of time. They have the largest majority in the history of Parliament; and what have they done?" He (Mr. Seddon) knew what the honourable gentlemen's tactics were. The Government would ask honourable members to consider that the country expected them to do their duty to the country, and they would not be doing their duty to the country unless they passed such laws as would eventually prove beneficial to the people of the country. This Bill was one of those necessary laws, and he was very sorry it had not been on the statute-book years ago. A number of the Bills the honourable gentleman mentioned had been before the country the previous session, and some of them had been reintroduced three or four times. The country was thoroughly conversant with those measures, and would not be taken by surprise if they were passed into law now. He undertook to say that if the honourable gentleman would only assist the

Government they could go through the Order Paper and do full justice to the whole of the Bills in a week.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—What about the Public Works Statement?

Mr. SEDDON said he had said that as soon as the necessary legislation was passed the Public Works Statement would be brought down. If the honourable gentleman would only pass those Bills that had been mentioned they should have the Statement next day, and he would allow this Bill to stand over till the Statement had come down. The number of Bills on the Order Paper was not so large as at the same period of the session last year, and they had a reasonable hope that the great majority of them would become law.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read a first time.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill, I will meet at the outset the objection that has been raised by the honourable member for Ellesmere—namely, that it would be unreasonable to expect that the Government should go on with this Bill, or attempt to pass its second reading, seeing that the Bill itself was only circulated yesterday afternoon. Sir, I say that this question of the control of the liquor traffic has been before the House the whole of the session. From the first day of the session, almost, we had the Bill introduced by the honourable member for the Peninsula. We had then the Direct Veto Bill introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua, and then we had introduced again by him the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. We had then a Bill introduced by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish)—also an amendment of the Licensing Act. We had therefore four Bills on the Order Paper. But we have had more than that. We have had during the recess an agitation going on in the country, and I undertake to say there is no subject upon which honourable members are so conversant as upon the liquor traffic and the necessity for its control and regulation. Sir, I take it that the debate we had on the second reading of the Bill introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua would almost suffice,—that nothing should be wanted to be done except a simple explanation from me of the Bill that is now before the House. Sir, the House is not taken by surprise. There is nothing in this Bill to surprise them, and there should be no such objection taken as that taken by the honourable member for Ellesmere—unless delay was desired: I can understand that. The Government have been twitted outside the House, inside the House, and in the lobbies with not being sincere in this question: it has been said that we did not desire to go on with this Bill,—that we adjourned the Committee on the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua, and that that was the last honourable members would hear of it. And when the Government, in this and other matters, prove by stubborn facts that we are sin-

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cere, and bring down our measures, before the House gets an opportunity to have the consideration of this Bill proceeded with, then the first cry is, "Postpone; give honourable members an opportunity of further considering." It is unreasonable to expect we should go on for ever. There is not a member in the House but is fully prepared to go on and discuss this question and come to a conclusion upon it. Sir, this is a large question. I say that I believe the time has arrived that it should be grappled with. We say that social reform in the way indicated in this measure is an absolute necessity. We say that this traffic should be regulated. We see daily, hourly, before us this necessity; and though the Government, perhaps, and though members here may be twitted for not having taken action sooner, yet, now the Bill is before the House, we should not be asked to further procrastinate. I should say myself that all good colonists would only be too pleased to see that this House this session has determined to deal with this question. It gives an opportunity of having settled, once and for all, a question that, when the next appeal is made to the people, must otherwise be a disturbing element. We should find large questions of policy subordinated to this particular question, and I should say the result would be very detrimental to both sides of the House. I should say that not only the Government supporters, but the members on the Opposition side of the House also should be only too glad that the Government is giving honourable members this session an opportunity of dealing with the question. We know that there are extreme views held upon this question by those who are for entire prohibition, who would not allow liquor to be manufactured at all, who would, at great risk and at great expense, prevent its being brought into the country, and who say unkind and uncharitable things of those who even take a little in moderation. Well, Sir, it would be of no use for the Government, or for Parliament, to attempt to please the people who hold these extreme views. Let me be honest to those who hold these views. I say there are amongst them many philanthropists whose endeavour is to do what is good for their fellows, and who, at considerable expense and inconvenience, make great sacrifices in the interests of their fellow-men. To these I give every credit. Then, we have other extremists, those whom I may designate as "reformed toppers"—those whose experiences have been such that they have seen the error of their ways—and they are prepared to go to a greater extreme than the philanthropist, and do not hesitate sometimes to hold themselves up as shocking examples. While, I say, it would be impossible, under these circumstances, to meet the extreme views expressed, or to take the extreme course we are asked to take—while there are extremists on the one side, there are also extremists on the other. There are some, Sir, engaged in the trade, some who hold very good positions in this country, having amassed considerable wealth by the traffic, who have not the slightest consciousness

there was anything wrong done; and they care not one jot, but think there should be free-trade in liquor—no restriction, regulation, or control. They are indifferent as to the welfare of their fellows. It would be impossible for me to say I would attempt, or ask the House to attempt, to legislate in such a way as to please these extremists; but I do say this: that it is the duty of the Government, it is the bounden duty of Parliament, to place this trade under restriction, and to enable the people to exercise a vote as to its regulation and control. Sir, it has been said in this House that as a result of our liquor traffic and trade there have been poverty, degradation, vice, and crime. Sir, I think that is taking an extreme view. It would in some instances be perfectly true, but I do not think it can be laid down as a general principle, or be accepted on the whole. I think statements of that kind—statements which are not entirely correct—do harm. Sir, I must ask the House now to look at the question and to face it, making due inquiry as to our present position. Nothing was said by the Government in the Speech from the Throne as to any intention of dealing with this matter this session. We must bear in mind that what has caused this question to come up so forcibly and so recently was the fact that there has been litigation going on between the contending parties in the Sydenham Licensing District; and, Sir, whilst during the recess the temperance party were satisfied to have the local-option clauses, with the powers that they considered were given to the Committees under the Act, and whilst during last election certain pledges were exacted from members of the House, it was only when the decisions of Judge Denniston were given, limiting the power of the Committees, on the ground of incurable bias, that the freedom of speech of candidates seeking election to a Licensing Committee was taken away. That was the effect of the decision—that is, that if a candidate had expressed an opinion, and stated what he would do if returned, then, having made that statement, if he acted accordingly, his vote, and the action of the Committee if consequent upon that vote, was by that decision set aside.

An Hon. MEMBER.—And properly so, too.

Mr. SEDDON.—“Properly so, too,” says an honourable member. Well, apply that to members of Parliament, to members of County Councils, to Harbour Boards, and other representative bodies, and we should have no freedom at all. And I will say that I understood all along that freedom was given. When I found it was not so I was surprised, and felt that, so far as I could, I should be only too glad to restore what were considered to be the rights of Licensing Committeemen when the Licensing Act was passed in 1881. As a result of Judge Denniston’s decision, supported as it has been by the Court of Appeal, we had the prohibition crusade; we had emissaries sent round by the temperance party to all parts of the colony. The result of this crusade has been the bringing of the subject

prominently before the House and the country, and the necessity of dealing with this question this session. I feel satisfied myself that when the crusade was agreed upon it was only thought to pave the way for the next general election. It was not thought that Parliament would deal with the question this session—in fact, it was stated so openly; but the result has been that Parliament has considered it necessary to deal with it now. I am speaking, I believe, the view of nearly every member of the House on this subject when we say that we are convinced that the time has arrived when we should pass a Bill through Parliament dealing with this question once and for all, and in such a way as will, at all events, satisfy the moderate people in this country. I have said that, as one of the results of the temperance crusade, we have had a number of Bills placed upon the Order Paper and brought under the notice of honourable members. Action has also been taken by persons engaged in the trade: they have had meetings, they have banded together, and they are taking steps to frustrate the action and the works of the prohibitionists. And we know that when the time comes for a dissolution, and we are sent to the country, and the electors are asked to send men to legislate, not upon one given subject, but upon all subjects needing legislation in the interests of the country—we know that there are two parties, and, no matter what a candidate’s fitness for the position of a member of Parliament may be, we know that unless he is prepared to commit himself on either one side or the other, and to abandon that independence which is absolutely necessary to a member of this House—unless he is prepared to do that, the result will be that probably we shall have the best men excluded from Parliament. And I say, seeing that these two parties are in this position, it is our bounden duty to step in and pass a measure which will pass by these parties and do justice to the country, resting satisfied that the House has done justice to them and their convictions. I will not refer to a previous debate, though I shall not be out of order if I refer the House to the position we were in when we were discussing certain measures, and when certain proposals were made by myself on behalf of the Government. I felt at that time that there was a great responsibility resting upon me. We had among our supporters, members of the Liberal party, men who held convictions upon this subject, and whose convictions were so strong that, irrespective of party, irrespective of friends they had worked with for years, they set those ties aside and made this question paramount. Had it not been that the Government refused to permit that to dominate legislation, the result would have been that we should have had a Bill from the hands of a private member dealing with this large subject; we should have found parties holding views as diverse as could possibly be, and the groundwork of the measure itself such that it would have been impossible to frame amendments; and the result would have been confusion, and probably

a law passed that would not do justice to the people of this country. The Government took up the position—and I believe, now it is all over, and honourable members have had time for reflection, they will admit that the position we took up was the correct one—that it was too large a subject to be dealt with by a private member, even though that member was the honourable member for Inangahua. But I say that it was not a question of the Government being taken into the “Ayes” lobby or into the “Noes” lobby. It was not a question of allowing their followers to be taken on one side of the House or the other. It was one of those questions on which the Government must accept the responsibility; the Government must lead, and not be led.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Being driven.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Government is neither being led nor being driven; but if the honourable member for Ellesmere and members on that side have not altogether forgotten or forgiven some of their friends who voted from conviction with the Government on the evening when we determined to lead in this matter, then I can understand why they regret it. They would have sacrificed this question and any other question if they only could have managed to put the Government in a false position. But I am very much pleased to know that there were also honourable gentlemen on the opposite side of the House who hold strong convictions, and who gave effect to those convictions, by voting with me. It was not made a party question—it was an open question. Well, notwithstanding the trouble, as honourable members must know, with other large questions the Government have to deal with, the time has been found to deal with this question. The Government have accepted the responsibility, and have furnished a positive disproof of the accusations made that we were insincere in dealing with this question. Let me now ask honourable members to turn to the Bill, and I will explain the measure, its general principles, and the effect of the measure if passed into law. In approaching this question, the Government, from information at our command,—which has been laid upon the table of the House, and which, I believe, is well known to honourable members,—asked this question: Is there a sufficient number of licensed houses in the colony? Comparing New Zealand with other countries, and from information and the knowledge we possessed, we came to the conclusion that it was simply a farce to put the question to the electors, “Shall there be an increase in the number of licensed houses?” Knowing, as I believe two-thirds of the members will admit, that there are as many licenses now as is good for the country, we then said boldly, Why trouble the people to express an opinion, when all know there are enough licensed houses? We said there shall be no increase of licenses in New Zealand for at least the next three years. In reply to an interjection of an honourable member, I may say that there is no power to give increased licenses, such as was given by the licensing-laws

as they were understood. The poll to decide as to whether there should be an increased number of licenses, which was known as the local-option clause of the Act of 1881—this is now swept away, and we have definitely said there shall be no new licenses granted, at all events for the next three years. I will meet the honourable member for Geraldine at once on this point. I call his attention to this: that under the Licensing Act of 1881 the Governor had not only the power to grant licenses, but also to create a district, so that if we allowed the law to remain as it was we should have said that the electoral districts shall be the districts for the future; but we reserve to ourselves the right to create special districts where there is a sudden increase of the population. As we are giving power to the people in one way, we said it was consistent with that that we should still reserve that right to them, and in this respect we have amended the law in such a way that, unless there is a sudden increase of the population, the responsibility rests with the Licensing Committee; and then we say that there shall be only one house to every seven hundred persons of the increase in that particular locality; and not only that, but one hundred persons must petition in the first place, and within the radius of two miles there must be only one license to seven hundred persons. We have definitely decided by the Bill that there shall be no increase at all for the next three years. Then, as regards reduction, I have watched very carefully what has taken place in different parts of the colony, and I have come to the conclusion it is the general opinion of the people that there are enough licenses. The votes that have been taken on that head have said so. There are very few places where an increase was voted for; but I believe the general expression of opinion has been that there is good ground for reducing the number in many parts of the colony. So we accepted that as being the generally expressed wish. We then come to the larger question, and one that is rather more involved—that is, the question of total prohibition by the direct veto. Upon that I shall explain the Bill when I come to that part of it. The Government hold it is of great importance that we should do nothing hastily, that due care should be taken, that due safeguards should be made; and such safeguards have been made as I am sure will prove acceptable to a majority of the House and of the people of the colony. I will say, then, that the principles of the Bill before the House are—moderation, reduction, regulation, and complete control. These, Sir, I may say, are the general principles contained in this Bill. Now, it may save time and discussion, and no doubt it will help to get the Bill passed into law, if I go into details on the Bill shortly, and explain the provisions. I would ask honourable members to take up the Bill and follow me whilst I give the necessary information and explanation. Of course there is an interpretation clause in the first part of the Bill. Then, following on to section 3, the Government have thought it wise that we

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should increase the boundaries of the licensing districts. We think it would be impossible to give effect to what is required by the people of the colony if we were to attempt to have the limits of the licensing districts circumscribed as they have been. It was against, I may say, the original intention of the framers of the Licensing Act of 1881 that the authorities might so subdivide, so reduce the size of the licensing districts that they could by any means circumvent the intention of those who passed the law of 1881. But, such was the law, we know that that has been done. We say, then, that the licensing districts shall have the same boundaries and they shall be the same districts as exist for the election of members of this House. And we say, in this matter, that if the people who send a member to this House are capable of exercising that power we should not be afraid to trust them with the selection of the members of a Licensing Committee, who are sitting to give effect to the legislation we may pass, and who, we say, should be well qualified to control this traffic; and I believe, by the extension of the boundaries, and by the widening of the selection, we shall have upon these Committees representative men, and men that will do justice to those who select them as their representatives. Not only that, but it will be a convenience, seeing that we can make use of the electoral rolls. If we were to subdivide the electoral districts for these purposes we should have to prepare separate rolls for the different localities. In this case the electoral roll will do for the two purposes. We have done that in other cases, and it is quite consistent with our legislation. I do not think there will be many objections taken to this course. I believe, myself,—seeing we should have after the next general election a purging of our rolls under the electoral laws, and the removal of names of those who do not record their votes,—we shall have complete rolls for the different electorates. Then, with regard to the provisions of section 3, I am afraid that we may find a difficulty there. We were going to abolish the special districts, but we met with a difficulty in regard to the Kermadec Islands, for instance. We found ourselves in the difficulty that certain districts had been proclaimed, and we could not abolish them. We had to allow for that, and hence in a subsection of this clause you will find it stated, "All parts of the colony now being outside of any electoral district are special licensing districts." There was a necessity for that, and I take this opportunity of explaining it, so that honourable members may know why it is so. As regards section 4, I have said that the special power given to the Government of the day has been taken there as to proclaiming new special districts, and I think it is so safeguarded that no exception will be taken to it. The next part of the Bill we come to is as to the Licensing Committees. I may say that if honourable members look at the qualifications and disqualifications under the Act of 1881 they will find that the restrictions that were placed there, instead of proving beneficial, were

quite the reverse. Those who were in the House at that time I think will admit that they went too far, and it was through this that conscientious men in many of the districts saw that they could not take a seat at all on a Licensing Committee. We had to amend, and amend in the direction indicated by this Bill. We think that any person who is directly concerned in the liquor traffic, or who is the owner of any licensed house, should not be qualified for a seat on the Committee, and we have gone as far as I think we can go consistently with obtaining the best men possible to sit on the Committees. Well, then, we have increased the number of members on these Committees. Having increased the boundaries, we thought we should also increase the number of the members, and it has been considered that, nine being the proper number for the County Councils, we should be right in following that example and fixing the number of members for the Licensing Committees at nine; with a quorum of five, the same as in our County Councils. I think that will give general satisfaction. The next question is as to the appointment of a Returning Officer. There has been some misconception in regard to the appointment of Returning Officers. It has been understood that when we used the words "Returning Officer" here we meant a Returning Officer under the Regulation of Local Elections Act; but if honourable members will look at the clause carefully they will find that the Returning Officer mentioned here is the same Returning Officer who acts in elections for the return of members of the House of Representatives, and his appointment is made by the Government of the day. So that we have taken from the local bodies the power that originally existed, and this we think, seeing that we have extended the boundaries, was a necessary alteration. Then, so as to encourage the very best men to assist in regulating this traffic, we have provided that members of Licensing Committees coming from a distance to attend the meetings of the Committees should be entitled to receive the amount of their actual travelling-expenses; and I feel satisfied that, though it may, perhaps, throw a slight burden upon the local authorities, yet it is in the interest of the people of the district that that provision should be made. As regards the cost, it is only small, and, in the case of so important a measure as this, it is necessary. As there will probably be more than one local body in a licensing district, it is necessary to alter the law so that, in proportion to the amount of the license-fees and the revenue of the local bodies, they may share the incidental expense.

Mr. FISH.—*Pro ratâ?*

Mr. SEDDON.—*Pro ratâ* in respect of the revenues received. We pass on to the next part of the Bill, and that is an important alteration in our licensing law. We have decided, and we hope the majority of the members of the House will agree with us, that no single woman should have a publican's license granted to her.

Mr. FISH.—Why, then, give her the right of voting in elections?

Mr. SEDDON.—We say, of course—I will not cast any reflection—that there are single women in the colony who have had licenses granted them, and who conduct their houses in a proper and fitting manner. At the same time, I do not think we are justified in placing a single woman in this position.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is degrading.

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not say that it is degrading, but at the same time I do say, and I say it advisedly, that the power previously granted should be taken away; and hence we have provided for it in this clause. We think, of course, as regards a widow, whose husband probably might have been the holder of a publican's license, that in that case, with a family there and other interests involved, it is right to make an exception, and such an exception has accordingly been provided for in this Bill. The same thing applies to a woman who has obtained a protection order against her husband.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is very unfair.

Mr. SEDDON.—At all events, that is debatable. We have thought it necessary to bring it into the Bill, and I hope honourable members will come to a conclusion upon it and agree with us. Then, we have gone further again in subsection (3) of this section 10. We have said here that there shall be no extension of the license to twelve o'clock. Midnight licenses we object to, and we say that they should be taken away. The original intention was to have ten o'clock licenses, with an hour's extension where necessary. I know that at the time the midnight extension was granted there was a diversity of opinion, and I now say, advisedly, to members of the House and to those who wish to regulate this traffic, that we should provide that after eleven o'clock the houses should be closed.

Mr. J. KELLY.—Will it apply to Bellamy's?

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not know that it would be wise to apply it to Bellamy's. If honourable members will look at subsection (5), on page 6, they will find there another provision which merits attention. As the law now stands, strange to say, a hotelkeeper is compelled, when he closes up his publichouse, to put up his shutters, and, at all events, to turn down the lights. With what result? Why, it has exactly the opposite effect to that intended; and we now say by this amendment that it is the correct thing to do to leave the window-shutters or blinds open, so that any one passing by, or the police, or the Inspector, may at all times, without going into the house at all, see what is going on.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about private bars?

Mr. SEDDON.—As to private bars, we have not dealt with them in the Bill; but there is, no doubt, a diversity of opinion as regards this question. It is probable we shall find an outlet from the difficulty when we are dealing in Committee with the Bill on this question. This, at all events, applies to main or public bars: that they are to be open at all times, with

no screen or shutters, so that the Inspector or the police or any person who so desires may see what is going on. With regard to subsection (7), I may say that it gives fixity to the holder of the license for three years. We say that, as we are to have a poll every three years, so long as the house is well and properly conducted the hotelkeeper shall be assured, until a new poll is taken at the end of three years, he shall have a right to a continuance of his first license. I think, myself, that while you are putting so many restrictions as are imposed by this Bill you should give some encouragement to a man to keep his house well. It will not only have a beneficial effect, but it will be considered by these people as a boon and encouragement to do what is right and proper. Then, as to increases in the number of licensed houses, we provide that there shall be no increases until after the next census is taken. There may be some people who will feel themselves injured by this provision; but I believe the general verdict of the country will be with the Government and the House if we say that there shall be no increases until after the next census is taken. Then, there is a further restriction in case of an increase in population. We think if there is an increase of 25 per cent. in the population, and if a poll is taken, and if there is this withdrawing power on the part of the Licensing Committee, and a further restriction that there shall only be an increase of a house to every seven hundred of increased population, it would be well to give the power asked for under this particular section. The next section is the most important in the Bill, and it provides that the questions to be put to the people shall be three. No provision in this respect that has been submitted to the House has been so simple as this. There are three questions to be submitted on which the people will have to vote: First, whether the present number of licenses is to continue; second, whether the number of licenses is to be reduced; and third, whether licenses are to be granted or not. We say, with regard to the proposals here submitted, the issue will be well understood, and the machinery provided in the shape of voting-papers will make the matter very simple. The three questions will be printed on the voting-paper, and the voter will only have to strike out two of the lines and leave one. You will thus get a decided expression of opinion. There is no complication of opinion, and after the first poll is taken we shall have a complete and impartial view of the opinions of the electors of the colony in this respect as it affects their particular district. I have no doubt that here, and in regard to subsection (2) of section 15, there will be a diversity of opinion. I may tell the House that we had considerable difficulty on this point. There have been some who have said that there should be two-thirds of the number on the roll polled, and also that there must be a two-thirds majority. We have heard some say that, having put No. 1, "Shall the licenses remain as they are?" and No. 2, "Shall there be a reduction?" then the ques-

tion, "Shall any licenses be granted?" should not be put. A large section of the population have insisted that one-half, at least, of the number on the roll should record their votes; and we think it is not unreasonable that, where there are, say, two thousand persons on the roll, and when such an important question as this is put to them, one-half should record their votes. It must be remembered, also, that we have not only to consider local interests, but that there are many colonial interests involved. We say that, where the people do not feel themselves justified in expressing an opinion on such an important question, we must, under the circumstances, take it for granted that they are satisfied to allow matters to remain as they are if one-half of the people do not record their votes. With regard to Question No. 1, "Shall licenses continue as they are?" and Question No. 2, "Shall they be reduced?" we say that the decision of the majority of the persons voting on those questions should be final and definite. I know that persons in the trade—brewers and publicans—do not approve of this, and they have asked the Government, and brought pressure to bear on the Government, to make alterations. But we have considered this matter from every standpoint. I may say that no more difficult subject has troubled the Government; but we consider that this is fair to all concerned, and we shall ask the House to support us in this proposal.

Mr. FISH.—Does the honourable member for Inangahua support it?

Mr. SEDDON.—There are extremists on both sides who are dissatisfied. There are on the one side the brewers and the hotelkeepers, who want proposals that are more suited to them; and there are on the other side those who hold extreme temperance views, who want the proportion of three-fifths reduced, and to make it a simple majority.

Mr. FISH.—Did Sir Robert Stout draft that clause?

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I believe if I said that Sir Robert Stout drafted the clause the honourable gentleman would vote against it; but I do not wish to put the honourable member for Inangahua in a false position, which I should be doing if I were to say he had anything to do with this measure. There is no one who has had the framing of this Bill except the Government. Speaking on the provision requiring a three-fifths majority, I may say that pressure has been brought to bear on the Government to make it a two-thirds majority of the total number of votes on the electoral roll, and also that it shall only be a majority of the votes polled that shall determine whether there shall be licenses or not. We say we cannot agree to that, and we are not prepared to agree to it. We think that with the restrictions that we have put, and with the disabilities that are imposed by this Bill, we should only be doing right if we granted that privilege. I say to the extremists on both sides, Be moderate; do not make it impossible for the Government to carry out this reform; do not ask us to do that which you know it will be

impossible for us to accede to. If you are in earnest and really want reform, and to have this traffic regulated and placed under proper control, accept these proposals, which are moderate, and which will settle this question once and for all. I really cannot continue my remarks, because there is a conversation going on where it should not be.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I rise to a point of order. I want to know whether the honourable gentleman is referring to me.

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not know whether a question to a Minister is a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It is not a point of order; but I think the reference was to the fact that I was giving information as quietly as I could to an honourable gentleman who was consulting me at my chair upon a point of procedure.

Mr. FERGUS.—It will be a very sad state of affairs if honourable members cannot go to you, Sir, and ask for information simply because the Premier is speaking.

Hon. MEMBERS.—There is no point of order.

Mr. SEDDON.—I desire to say that there is, as a rule, too much conversation going on in the House, and, if it goes on with the Chair during the time of a debate, it may be that members addressing the House might say things that the Chair could not hear. I think it would be well for honourable members to wait until a member has done speaking.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I rise to a point of order; and it is this: that the Premier's remarks just now were a distinct reflection on the Chair. Is it to be the rule that no honourable member is to consult you, Sir, unless he gets the Premier's permission? The honourable member for Mount Ida has just now consulted you, and you, who have charge of this House, have consented, and therefore, Sir, the Premier is distinctly calling your conduct in question. That is the point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The conduct of the Speaker cannot be called in question except by formal resolution of which notice is given. I do not think that any reflection on the Chair, was intended in this instance; but, the question having been raised, I wish to say that during the twenty and odd years that I have been a member of this House, I have always seen those who have so worthily occupied the seat I now hold consulted at the chair from time to time on points that may have arisen. As a matter of courtesy, I was giving such information to an honourable gentleman on a technical point, and I am very sorry if the Premier's attention was distracted in any way thereby.

Mr. SEDDON.—I may say that I did not wish to prevent anything from being done that has been done previously, but that the conversation that was going on was very embarrassing. It was impossible for me to clearly express my views, or to explain the Bill; and members could not hear what I was saying; otherwise I should not have called attention to the matter at all. Honourable members may not know that it has that effect, but, now that they do know it, perhaps it will make a

difference. Now I come to the reduction of the number of licenses in a district by one-fourth. I said that it will be contended that power should be given to make any reduction the Committee might think proper. It may be the result of this would be that the members of Committees elected would be extreme prohibitionists, probably, against the moderate drinkers; and the aim of the extremists on obtaining the majority on the Committees would be to carry out that which it was by a majority said should not be carried out—that is, total prohibition and non-granting of licenses. That is bound to lead to complications, and to a result against what the people intend, and what the majority meant should happen. There is also another phase of the question, and that is in connection with the finances of the local authorities. If the number of licenses in a district is reduced by one-quarter, a local authority which previously got £1,000 for license-fees would suffer a loss to the extent of £250—one-quarter—and we think that would be sufficient. Then, the Bill gives a further provision at the next poll to reduce again by another quarter, so that those who wish to gradually reduce the number of licenses in their districts only require to vote at periodical polls, and then they can give effect to their wishes. And we say the Government is bound, and the House is bound, to look at the way in which it may affect our local governing bodies. We must not attempt to shirk this responsibility; and whilst we have done this we have taken precautions that, in case reductions take place, there shall be power to make good the loss of revenue if the local authorities see fit. We say this is a matter that should be considered by the local authorities of the district when considering the questions submitted to them. Under the last part of this subsection we have said, also, as to how the reduction is to take place. We say that if any person has been found guilty of selling liquor to children, or of keeping open during prohibited hours, and his license has been indorsed for an offence, his license shall be among the first taken away. There are many licensed houses where there is little or no accommodation for the general public, but which are simply drinking-shops, or bars; and we have said that they shall be the first to be closed, with those who have offended against the law. I think that the House will agree with me in saying that this provision is necessary and will prove beneficial. There has been a misprint here in the proviso to section 17. It was intended, though the provision is reversed here, that notwithstanding a local authority was rating up to its maximum rating-power, it should have power to strike a rate in excess of that maximum so as to make good the amount lost by the reduction of licenses. That will only affect local authorities up to their maximum rating-power, and there is no necessity for it because they have that power already, so there is no use in putting it in the Bill. Our original intention was that, in order to make good the amount lost, they should have power to increase the

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rates to that amount only. We have also, under section 18, made provision that where there is a lease of licensed premises which have a value owing to the license attached, and where a higher rental is given owing to that condition, and where by the vote of the electors that value is taken away, that lease shall be void. To omit such a provision would be very hard and unjust, and might have the effect, in many instances, of keeping persons away from voting for the granting of licenses. Unless we make a provision of this kind it will tend to prevent people from voting for the reduction of the number of licenses, because they would not wish to do an injustice to a neighbour. But I believe if we pass this it will take away this injurious result, and we place the loss upon the shoulders of the owner of the premises. I hope the House will agree to that. Now I come to the final proposal of the Bill—I allude to the placing of clubs under the restrictions mentioned in section 19, *et cetera*. I have no doubt the Government will be taken to task very much by members of clubs.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am much pleased to hear that. I was much afraid when we decided on doing this that the clubs in the colony and their members would consider it an invasion on their rights and privileges, and that they would object to it and try to bring pressure to bear on the Government not to allow of this being placed in the Bill. But I have never, myself, since the passing of the Act of 1881, seen why clubs should have the privileges they have; they pay practically no license—only £5 per annum. The minimum fee for membership of any club is not fixed—it may be only a shilling a year; and for this small fee the members have all the privileges which we say, as regards licensed houses, shall be denied to the general public. I do not see the force of it. I think, myself, that a very great injury might be done. If the law continues as it is at present, the intention of the Legislature might be altered, and with the passing of this we say that the clubs should be brought under the review of the electors as much as any licensed house. I feel sure that no well-conducted club—either gentlemen's clubs or working-men's clubs—will at all object to this proposal. I should be sorry if they did. Well-conducted clubs will, I feel sure, hail this provision for placing them under police supervision with satisfaction. It would be a great danger, if provision were not made against it, that while the people voted to reduce the number of hotels you might find twenty persons joining together to form a club and applying to the Government of the day to grant them a license. It is quite possible this might occur—in fact, I am sure it would—and it would throw the responsibility on the Government of the day. Perhaps the Government might grant a license, and then it might be said that those who applied for it were men of “the right colour,” and in other cases, where it was refused, it might be attributed to other circumstances. We say that, at all events, no club charter

shall be granted except on the recommendation of the Licensing Committee for the district, and they will have this responsibility upon them. We have not altered the fee at all, nor the membership, but simply put them under restriction, and say that no new charter shall be granted except upon the recommendation of the Committee. When I first promised the House that the Government would deal with this question and bring in a Bill dealing with it, trusting that it would give satisfaction, I must say I had my misgivings, and I feel sure that honourable members had very serious misgivings; but we have done our best, we have given the matter very careful study, and we give our proposals now to the House and the country, which we hope the House will accept in the interests of the country; and it is with some degree of confidence that I now move the second reading of the Bill.

Sir J. HALL.—Sir, I do not rise for the purpose of discussing the Bill, but for the purpose of saying a word on the subject of the conduct of the Government in regard to it. The Prime Minister said that it was a very large and important question, and that the time had arrived when it should be grappled with. I believe the time has arrived when it should be grappled with; but it appears to me that the Government have been led to deal with it, not by any conviction on their own part, but through their eyes having been opened to the necessity of doing so by the majority of two votes by which they escaped defeat on a recent occasion. If they had not found that their own Ministerial existence depended on their dealing with this question they would have no more dealt with it now than they proposed to deal with it in the Governor's Speech. They found they could not depend on their own supporters allowing them to leave the question untouched. So much for the reasons why the Government are dealing with this question. I think the country is fully alive to the position, and will not owe the Government much thanks, inasmuch as it knows that they are dealing with the question, not because of a wish to do so, but because of its necessity to their political existence. I must decline, Sir, to discuss the Bill, because there has never been a case within my experience in which so large and important a measure has been proceeded with on such short notice. It was placed in our hands yesterday afternoon. We were engaged till eleven o'clock last night in this House, and most honourable members have been on Committees the whole of this morning, and have not had an opportunity of making themselves acquainted with its contents. We have not had that reasonable opportunity of considering the Bill that we ought to have. And I go further and say that not only have honourable members not had an opportunity of acquainting themselves with the principles of the Bill, but a Bill on this large subject is one in which a great public interest is taken, and which the country at large ought to have an opportunity of considering and expressing a voice upon before we are called on to vote on

it. The Bill ought to be circulated, and at least eight or ten days allowed to ascertain the opinion of the large portion of the community who take a deep interest in the matter. The Government, in now asking the House to read the Bill a second time, are pressing it on with indecent and undesirable haste. For these reasons I must decline to go into a discussion of the Bill. The Government have not afforded the House and the country an opportunity of fairly considering it.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Sir, like my honourable friend the member for Ellesmere, I have hardly had time to look through this Bill. It has only just been circulated, and our time since has been wholly occupied; but as far as I have been able to discover there is one important omission in connection with it, and that is that railway licenses are not in any way controlled by this Bill. I consider, if clubs are to be placed under the control of Licensing Committees, so also should be the licenses granted to railway refreshment-rooms throughout the colony; and I would go further in that connection and say that if licenses are to be granted to railway refreshment-rooms the fees should go to the local authorities, instead of to the Railway Commissioners' funds. I shall not now go into the merits of the Bill, because there has not been sufficient time to give it that study which a measure so far-reaching in its effects requires.

Mr. FISH.—Sir, I cannot for my life understand honourable gentlemen when they say that the second reading of this Bill has been brought on too early—that they have not had time to understand the provisions of the Bill. Why, I venture to say that any person of ordinary average intelligence could grasp the provisions of this Bill in at least an hour's time, and two or three times' reading of this Bill would be quite sufficient to enable any man of ordinary intelligence to understand all the details of it. And, as has been said to-day, this question is not a surprise to honourable members. It is a question which has been agitating this House the whole of this session, and the whole of the country for a considerable time before the session; and to say now that we are not prepared to go into it seems to me to be one of those extraordinary statements out of all understanding. The Premier stated before he brought in this Bill that he hoped to be able to bring in a measure that would please everybody. Well, I beg to tell that honourable gentleman he has brought in a measure which does not please me, because I consider the whole tenor and scope of this Bill is a playing into the hands of the temperance party; and I should not be at all surprised to learn—I do not suppose I shall learn—that the honourable gentleman has called into his counsels in this question some extremist on his side of the House, or I cannot understand why he should bring in a Bill which, in its main and fundamental features, is so opposed to what is called fair-trade. Before going further and dealing with the merits of the Bill I should like, however, to give the Government credit for this: I

may say that the Bill, as drafted, is a splendid attempt to grapple with a very complex question, and the honourable gentleman has, with great ability, I think, drawn between his fingers and thumb the first threads of this question in a most successful manner. I am objecting to the details of the measure, and to what is the crux of this Bill, the 15th clause. I think the honourable gentleman is further to be complimented on this fact: that he has made an honest attempt to withdraw this very vexed question from the sphere of politics next election, and had he done nothing else he deserves the thanks of both sides, extremists and moderates alike, for the honest attempt made in this Bill to withdraw this question from the sphere of politics during the next election. There is no doubt at all that a number of persons would, if this question were still an "Open, sesame," as it were, at the time of the next elections, cast their votes for various candidates irrespective of their other requisites for parliamentary representatives, on account of of what they would say upon this particular question. We know all these things are disturbing influences in an election, and prevent the electors from having a really fair chance of deciding who is the best man. Therefore, so far as that is concerned, again I say the Government deserve great credit for what they are attempting to do. Another thing I say they deserve credit for is in the decided attempt—not an attempt, but the fact that they have proved they have no desire to shirk this question. They have taken it up, and have only taken a sufficient time to prepare their Bill, and show that they desire to go on with this question at once: they want no more dilly-dallying. And then they are told that they are approaching this question with undue haste. Well, Sir, if they had not brought this Bill forward they would have been told that they were insincere, that they did not intend to grapple with it, and that they were doing the same as they did with the woman's franchise; that it was unfair, and that they were simply humbugging the people. It does not appear to me to be the duty of the Opposition to take a stand like that. If the question is to be settled, if the people demand some settlement of it, then the Opposition ought to consider it their duty to assist any Government, no matter what Government are in power, in maturing a Bill which will give effect to what they believe to be the wishes of the people: there should be no attempt on the part of the Opposition to raise an issue which they would say justified them in joining forces with the extreme section of another side in order to flout the Government. It seems to me the duty of the Opposition is rather to fight the Government on some fair and square issue, and not endeavour to flout them upon this question, which is outside fair fight in opposition politics. That is my opinion as far as that is concerned. I have said I am not satisfied with this Bill, and I shall endeavour to give a few reasons why I am not satisfied with it. One very great inconsistency in the Bill is this: that, whilst by clause 5 it is

provided that no brewer nor any person interested in hotel property shall have a seat on the Licensing Committee, yet in another clause it is proposed, re-enacting a clause of which the honourable member for Inangahua gave notice in his own Bill, to allow prohibitionists of the most extreme kind to sit on these Committees, although they know that they are not going there to carry out the provisions of the Act, but to absolutely ignore its provisions. I say that, if you admit a principle like that in your laws, it is contrary to the British Constitution, and subversive of every principle of right. I know very well the honourable member for Inangahua will laugh. He laughs at everything, and at everybody except himself, at whom he ought to laugh the most, if he only knew it. What would be thought of our passing a law dealing with criminals or dealing with civil cases which allowed a Judge to sit upon the bench and give decisions not in accordance with the law he had to administer, but according to his views of what ought to be law? And to allow a man to sit upon the bench dealing with a question of this kind whose views are totally opposed to the licensing-law altogether is to do a thing that is wrong, and subversive of every principle of British liberty and justice; and I trust that clause will be struck out in Committee, or that the Government will allow persons interested in the trade to have a seat on the Committee if people choose to elect them. If it be fair to prevent persons interested in the trade from having a seat upon a Committee, even a man owning property that is leased by a publican—if it be right to prevent him or them from having seats on the Committee, surely it must be equally right to prevent these extreme people who would grant no licenses under any consideration whatever. That is one of the greatest flaws in the Bill, and it could only have been put there by the occult influence of some member of this House who has got the ear of the Government, which I, and those working with me, have not. Then, there is another clause in this Bill preventing women from holding a license unless they should be married women divorced or separated from their husbands, or widows. I do not approve of women holding licensed houses at all; but, while I do not approve of it, I wish to point out the extreme inconsistency there is in a Government who bring in a Bill that says women are equal to men in all things, but who here say they shall not be able to trade in the ordinary way the same as men do. It is entirely and utterly inconsistent, and shows how you can vote one way to-day, and say you do so on principle, and then vote against the same principle to-morrow. Then, there is clause 10 of this Bill, which provides that the bar windows shall be unscreened both day and night. Now, this is another emanation from the opposite side. I suspect the honourable member for Ashley is responsible for this clause, or perhaps the honourable member for Inangahua and he have done it together. I think they prompted it, and I believe the Premier has taken the advice-

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of those opposed to the trade. I cannot help saying what an absurd provision this is. If the Government had said the windows of a hotel bar should not be closed after eleven at night I could have understood it, because that would prevent the licensee's allowing persons to congregate in that bar without being seen by the police and the guardians of the law; but to say that during the whole of the day a person who comes in to take a glass of refreshment of any kind shall be exposed to the gaze of the larrikin, who may sing out, "Here, Bill, here is old So-and-so having another soak," is one of the things perfectly unheard-of in any British community. This rule applies, I believe, in America, but not there to the respectable licensed houses, but to what are known, I am told, as saloons—that is, mere drinking-shops, places which are open simply for the sale of liquors, and not for the accommodation of travellers: and I am quite sure my honourable friend could not have considered the effect of this clause, or he would never have drafted it as it is. I trust that in Committee he will not insist upon a provision of that kind remaining in the Bill. If it provides that after ten o'clock no blind shall be down, nothing be done by the licensee to obscure what is going on inside his bar, then I say it is a very proper provision.

MR. SANDFORD.—Is that not during prohibited hours?

MR. FISH.—No.

MR. SANDFORD.—Then you have not read the Bill.

MR. FISH.—I find, upon looking over the clause again, that I have misread it, and the opening of the windows of bars to the public gaze is only intended to apply to hours when the house ought to be closed. That, to a very large extent, removes the objection that I had to the clause. At the same time, I think that will have to be altered. The alteration I have to suggest by-and-by is simply a Committee amendment, and may be taken then. The clause that is really the whole crux of the Bill is clause 15, and that deals with the main features of the whole question. To clause 15 I have to express my strongest objection. The Bill provides that the decision as to whether the existing number of licenses in a district is to be continued may be carried by a bare majority of those who vote; and if the licenses are to be reduced, that also may be carried by a bare majority. I do not think it is fair that either one question or the other should be decided by a bare majority of those voting, because it has been said in the past, and will be so in the future, that, whilst one section of the community will not only poll themselves but will induce their friends to do so likewise, the great body of the electors, who are not in favour of reducing the number of licenses, or who may not be in favour of any more being issued, will not go to the poll and record their votes. Therefore I do not think it right that these two questions should be decided by a bare majority, and I think that in all cases where bare majorities are to rule there certainly

should be a second poll provided in order to prevent a surprise majority from being obtained. But the principal item in this clause is the 3rd subsection, I think, which deals with the question of whether there shall be any licenses granted at all, and the Government propose in this Bill that the proposition shall be carried by three-fifths of the votes recorded being in its favour. I say that is altogether inadequate to meet the case, and that to settle such a momentous question, where such enormous interests are involved, by a three-fifths majority of those voting is, to my mind, to encourage spoliation and confiscation. But I dare say my objection will be met with this reply: that there is a proviso which says that unless the majority polling is a majority of those on the roll the voting will be void. I am free to admit that, to the extent it goes, this saving proviso is in the right direction; but I do not think the interests of this large body of persons—a body that has invested in the shape of capital such an enormous amount of money—I do not think their interests ought to be imperilled in the first instance by so small a majority as three-fifths of those polling. At the very least it ought to have been two-thirds, not of those polling, but two-thirds of those on the roll. If that had been maintained it would have shown the people really what the vote implied; but simply to carry a proposition of this kind by a majority of three-fifths of those polling, even with the provision to which I have alluded, is, to my mind, sailing far too close to the wind, and altogether too great a concession to the extremists of the other side. Then, there is another clause which I strongly object to, which provides that votes given that there be no licenses at all, and the votes given for reduction of licenses, are to be added together, and, if the two added together make a majority, then it is an instruction to the incoming Committee that the number of licenses shall be reduced. I say this is not fair. I say that in all probability a great injustice may be done by the adding of those two classes of votes together, and in Committee I shall do my best to alter that, and the other clauses to which I have referred. If the issue should result in a decision that licenses be reduced, then we have to look how that is to be carried out, and we find that the result of the voting being in favour of the reduction of licenses means an instruction to the Committee that those licenses shall be reduced by one-fourth.

AN HON. MEMBER.—No; "not more than one-fourth."

MR. FISH.—I beg the honourable gentleman's pardon—not more than one-fourth. I do not know that in the case of the cities that is a very harsh provision, but I think the result may be unjust in sparsely-settled districts. Then, here is another Committee objection, which may be discussed more properly in Committee. Supposing at a poll in one of our cities, say Dunedin, the result of the first poll is that a reduction of licenses shall take place, the succeeding poll may follow in the same way,

and in a very few years we shall have no licenses at all in the city.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. FISH.—That, I think, would be a great wrong, and would tend to interfere with the rights of the people in a way that would be exceedingly objectionable. My honourable friend the member for Clutha referred to the railway licenses, and said these ought to be included in this Bill, and be treated the same as the other licenses. I do not agree with my honourable friend there, because I think it is an absolute necessity that at large stations upon railway-lines there should be refreshment-rooms, and that at those rooms they ought to be allowed to sell alcoholic liquors. There is another objection I have to this Bill, and that is, that it prevents any issue of "midnight" licenses. I have always been of opinion, with regard to this question, that there should be three classes of licenses—ten-o'clock, eleven-o'clock, and twelve-o'clock licenses; and I would provide that licenses in neighbourhoods of a purely domestic character should not extend beyond ten o'clock, because I say that in those localities what is wanted in the evening is simply what is known as supper-beer, and any person who requires refreshment of that kind ought to get it before ten o'clock; and the other objection I have to houses in the neighbourhoods to which I have referred being open after ten o'clock is that they act as traps to catch the unwary on their way home. Were these houses shut rigidly at ten o'clock many a man who is on his homeward journey would arrive home very considerably earlier than he does now. Then, I think that in other localities not so entirely of a domestic character as those I have referred to, but which are closer to the centres of population, they might fairly remain open till eleven o'clock. Then, I think there should also be a twelve-o'clock license for the better class of hotels in the main line of road in the city—for instance, in Princes and George Streets in Dunedin. I think discretion might be given to the Magistrates to grant licenses up to twelve o'clock, because I think honourable members will agree with me when I say that, whenever theatrical performances are going on in the large cities, they do not conclude till eleven o'clock. I think it is only fair to allow those attending them to have the opportunity of obtaining refreshment when the entertainment is closed. I have stated these objections not altogether in a hostile spirit to the Bill, but because I deem it to be my duty to do so on behalf of the interests of the trade, which has been assailed so strongly in the House this session, and has been harassed so much for a long time outside this House. It is in justice to them that I speak, and I shall endeavour to the best of my ability to correct the evils of the Bill in Committee. I would impress this upon the Premier very strongly: that unless the proviso is strictly maintained, and unless the Government maintain that to the best of their ability, clause 15 is one which I shall be compelled myself to fight word by word and letter by

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letter; because, as I have already said, a three-fifths majority is not fair, in my opinion; and if you take away the proviso at the end of that clause it becomes utterly destructive of vested interests, which, I think, have a right to be protected. I will conclude my remarks by again expressing my approval of the excellent manner in which the Government have endeavoured to grapple with a very complex question. Whether I agree with them in detail or not, I am bound to say that they have taken this question up in an earnest and sincere manner, and in a manner which has raised them very considerably, so far as their constructive ability is concerned, in my estimation. It shows that when they are put face to face with a very difficult question, and are compelled by the force of public opinion to tackle a question, they have the ability, the brains, and the firmness to tackle that question in a fair and honest and determined manner.

Sir R. STOUT.—I will not take up the time of the House more than two or three minutes. I think that this debate will have a very beneficial effect upon the people of the colony, because it will show what really is the question in dispute as to this licensing matter. We are told that many hotels kept open after a certain hour are traps to catch the unwary on their way home in the evening. I do not know, if that be so, if it is wise for the Legislature to lay traps beyond those already in existence. We have also been told that, unless the Bill was made more in the interests of the people for whom a certain member of this House speaks, then he would stonewall the Bill.

Mr. FISH.—I rise to a point of order. I never used such a word as the honourable gentleman has just stated, and, if I did not now correct him it would go unchallenged into *Hansard*.

Sir R. STOUT.—Is that, Sir, a point of order?

Mr. SPEAKER.—No; that is not a point of order; it is a personal explanation.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is true that the word "stonewall" was not used, but the fact is quite as I say. All its clauses, he said, would be attacked "word by word." What does that mean?

An Hon. MEMBER.—"—and letter by letter."

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes—"and letter by letter."

What does that mean? I hope members of the House are not going to be intimidated by any waste of time that may be caused by that honourable member. Now, I wish to point out that the vital point of the Bill, so far as I am concerned, is the 15th clause. And what does it mean? Why, it means this, Sir: that the principles of Liberalism are cast to the winds, if this clause be adopted. What is the principle that underlies Liberalism? It is, that the majority must govern. If this be a matter for legislation, if this be a matter for local control, then, I say, the people must govern, and they must do so by a majority. But, if you say it is not a matter for local control, and not a matter for legislation, then you have no right to pass a Bill with that 15th clause in

It. I submit that, so far as the 15th section is concerned, any Liberal who votes for that simply votes for giving up the foundation on which Liberalism rests, for that means the being ruled by the majority. What about the latter proviso of the 15th clause? What does it mean? It means that if there be bogus votes created, dead men put on the roll, men who are not in the district put on the roll—all the absentees, and men who cannot vote, or who should have no right to vote, will practically have their votes counted as if they had voted against. That is the meaning of the last proviso, for if half the total number of voters do not vote the whole of the poll is invalid. I say again that that section strikes at the very root of Liberalism. What does Liberalism demand? It demands that, if there be a number of people voting against the object in view and a number in favour of it, those who do not vote at all shall have no right to have their votes counted. Practically, it demands that—that only those who go to the poll and vote shall have their votes considered. But this means voting in a way that would utterly destroy the poll altogether. There are other clauses of the Bill that I do not agree with, and I shall certainly press the amendment of which I have given notice as regards the voting under the 15th section. If that 15th section is to be left in its present state, then, I say, this will be a burning question at the next general election. Do not let us imagine that those who are advocating, and have been advocating for years, the right of local control over this traffic are going to be content with a Bill of this character. The value of this Bill will be this: that it will emphasize, if it be passed in this shape, the need of having this question discussed at the general election, and it will raise this licensing question to be the question at the general election,—the question which will overshadow all others.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why should it not be?

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member asks, "Why should it not be?" I ask, Why should it not be, if the House will not pass a reasonable Bill? I say that what would make it a reasonable Bill is, that this question shall be determined by the majority. Are we going to shut up tradesmen's shops, by a Shops Bill, by a three-fifths majority? I am willing to submit to the same principle that is being applied for that purpose. I submit that this Bill is illogical. It either means local control or it does not; and if you are not going to give local control by a majority, then it is not local control in the true sense of that term. You are merely offering the people a sham, a delusion, and a snare; and the people will be prompt to see that when it comes to a vote.

Mr. FISH.—Will you allow me one word, Sir, by way of personal explanation? In any remarks that I made in the course of my speech I never mentioned such a word as stonewalling. Neither did I give the impression that I intended to stonewall. I therefore protest against words being placed in my mouth, as was done by the last speaker.

Mr. FERGUS.—I was one of those who, the other evening, supported the Premier in his amendment, and I did so because I thought that a question of such great magnitude as this should not be placed in the hands of any private member of the House at all; that it was a question of such great importance that if it was to be taken up at all, it was right that the Government should take it up. I am of that opinion still. I say that no large question like this can be dealt with properly by any single individual member of the House, no matter who he may be. It is one that ought properly to be taken in hand by the Government. But, Sir, while I say that, I confess, at the same time, that I do not see any reason for the introduction of this measure at all. I believe the Act which is now in operation, if rigorously administered, would accomplish all we require for years to come. The whole cry for the introduction of a new licensing-law has arisen from the now celebrated Sydenham case, and I am, for one, very sorry indeed that the position of the Committee in that case was upset by the Supreme Court. At the same time, the law in that respect has failed, if we are to believe, as of course we are bound to do, that the Judge is right in his exposition of the law; and I think the House might very well, for the time being, have been content with amending the law so as to apply to cases like the Sydenham case, and not enter upon a discussion on a measure like this. The honourable member for Inangahua asks, "Why have a two-thirds or a three-fifths majority in a Bill like this?" I say this House—or any other House which was elected, as we were three years ago, before this became a burning question, or before, at any rate, it was the burning question that it is now—has no right to pass a Bill of this character, without referring it again to the constituencies for their verdict. My opinion on that matter runs on all-fours with my opinion with regard to the Electoral Bill which we passed the other evening. But at the same time I must give the Government, and the Premier, credit for having done their best in a very difficult matter. I do not agree with the Premier, nor do I agree with the provisions of the measure. I think there are very many anomalies in it, and anomalies which the honourable gentleman, if he had given the subject a little consideration, or a little more consideration, would have seen to be quite unworkable. In the first place, I object entirely to the size of the licensing districts which it is proposed to constitute. I call the attention of my honourable friends to that. Take, for instance, the honourable gentleman's own electorate,—or take mine. It is something like two hundred and fifty miles square, and how are we going to elect nine men to grant licenses over that district, when the people at one end of the district know absolutely nothing about those at the other end? The distance is far too great. It is an essentially busy community, sparsely settled, with every little hamlet or collection of houses, every little gully, possessing its own house of accommodation. I ask, how

are you going to ask the settlers of Otama, for instance, to determine what is right and proper for those who reside on the other side of the ranges? Does any member of the House think for a single moment that it is possible to get a fair expression of opinion in a district so scattered? Sir, it cannot be done. The towns or the districts contiguous to the towns may be created licensing districts, but in such an electorate as I have the honour to represent this Bill will entirely defeat the object of the temperance party in this House, and the Bill, so far as they are concerned, will be entirely inoperative. Then, there is another provision which I object to. I object to the manner in which Committeemen are to be paid. Supposing this Bill passes this House and the other branch of the Legislature, and receives the Governor's assent, what would inevitably occur then? Each individual district remote from the centre of the electorate will wish to be represented on the Licensing Committee, and the persons elected will have to be paid their expenses, as provided by the Bill, for their attendance at the quarterly meetings for the discussion of licensing matters, and you will thereby increase to a serious extent the expense of the administration of the licensing-law. But, Sir, I go further than that. I say that, supposing that it were possible—which I do not believe it is—to bring to the poll a sufficient number of these electors who are in favour of prohibition to carry it, then this will occur: that the local bodies whose revenue has been depleted by the taking-away of the publicans' licenses and, consequently, of the fees they derive therefrom, would have to be provided with the means of raising additional revenue to meet the liabilities under which they stagger at the present time; because every one of the small boroughs and County Councils throughout the colony has borrowed very largely, and has obtained an overdraft on the strength of its general revenue, and these boroughs may very well come to the House and say, "Having robbed us of that which we gave as security for the overdrafts that we obtained from the banks and other financial institutions, it is your bounden duty to come forward and help us out of the difficulty into which you have brought us." I do not think that in claiming that they would be claiming any more than is their due. There will be all the more reason for this because the whole system of the election of the Licensing Committees is to be changed. Formerly the election of the Committees was in the hands of the ratepayers; but this Bill is to put it into the hands of the whole population. It is probable—in fact, it is almost certain—that in a few days we shall be adding to the electors of the colony just as many more as there are now enrolled, by reason of the extension of the franchise to the women. Here, then, you will have a considerable addition made to the number of those who will be entitled to take part in the election of the Licensing Committees. What will they be voting for? Contingent upon the polling, they will be voting to put the money lost by the

abolition of the licenses—that is to say, the revenue derived from the license-fees—upon the shoulders of the ratepayers—upon the property-holders of their particular district. In other words, those who contribute nothing at all to the expense of government by the local bodies will have the chief and the final voice in determining that the burdens already borne by the property-owning population shall be increased. I do not think that is fair. I have another objection to the Bill, and that is on the score of the heavy expense the local bodies will be put to. I take it that the licensing elections throughout the colony cannot be carried on more economically than the election of members of this House. If my memory serves me, I think it takes at the present time £20,000 to defray the cost of a general election for members of this House; and if we are going to have, in the same manner, an election of Licensing Committees throughout the colony, that will mean that we shall put on shoulders that are unable to bear it at the present time a burden of £20,000 to provide for the election of these Licensing Committees, and when, as I said before, they are very ill able to bear that burden. But I have still another objection—and here I may say that I am stating these objections as briefly as I possibly can—and it is an objection which the Premier will appreciate quite well. This Bill provides that, in any poll taken in an electoral district, an increase of licenses cannot be granted except under certain conditions, and these licenses can only be granted at the rate of one for every seven hundred of the population. Now, that is sheer nonsense, especially when applied to sparsely-populated districts. I will cite a case which the honourable gentleman will understand. There is a little district in the goldfields of Otago called the Nevis, where the total population does not amount to seven hundred souls altogether. It is some twenty miles long, and is inhabited entirely by diggers. It is a considerable distance away from close population. There are two accommodation-houses there now for travellers. Now, supposing there was another small rush ten miles from that, by which a hundred or two hundred persons were attracted there, it would be impossible, if this law were in force, to establish another house where those people could get accommodation, even though the people themselves were willing that a license should be granted. Then, let the honourable gentleman take his own district—all that country south of Ross. Supposing that a rush were to break out and a goldfield to be established on one of the estuaries of the rivers there, if this Bill were in operation they could not get a licensed house there unless there was an increase of seven hundred people; and what would those who had been attracted there do? I will tell you what they would do: an accommodation-house would be started, and they would sell liquor, and neither the honourable gentleman nor all his police would be able to stop it. You may depend upon it that there would be sly grog-selling carried on. It takes men who

Mr. Fergus

are acquainted with sparsely-populated districts to explain these matters to the House. I know that the honourable member for Inangahua now represents a country district, but he has always previously represented a large city, and he really knows nothing about the wants of such a district as I have referred to; and the same may be said of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), who represents a large centre of population. Those honourable gentlemen know absolutely nothing of the wants and requirements of the country settlers. I can remember, twenty years ago, when I was a Civil servant and was travelling through the goldfields of Otago, when the licensing-laws were regulated, and well regulated, by the Resident Magistrates, far better than they have ever been regulated by any of these Licensing Committees.—I remember that all along the road you could find houses in which liquor was sold—houses that were not under police inspection. I say that if we are going to enforce such a drastic measure as this we shall only be holding out a premium to sly grog-selling, and thereby be defeating the very object we have in view—that of regulating and controlling the liquor traffic. You cannot regulate it in this way, and, if you bind the bands too closely, as surely as the sun shines in the heavens above us, so surely will the people burst those bands asunder, and we shall have a worse state of things existing in the country than that we are trying to remedy. I say this Bill is too drastic, and the Premier knows it. Supposing a small rush were to break out in some corner of his electorate, and this Bill were law, the Licensing Committee would be prohibited from granting a license there for a house that would be absolutely necessary for that part of the country, because no increases are to be granted unless there is a certain increase of population. What would be the result?

Mr. SEDDON.—Look at clause 4.

Mr. FERGUS.—I have read clause 4, and it means this: that, when the population of any riding of a county, or a road district in a county where the Counties Act is suspended, has increased, the Governor may grant permission for the issuing of licenses. I read that to mean that it applies only to counties in which the Counties Act has been suspended.

Mr. SEDDON.—The same provision is in the present Act.

Mr. FERGUS.—Only where the Counties Act is suspended.

Mr. SEDDON.—It meets both cases—where there is a riding and where the Act is suspended.

Mr. FERGUS.—Well, any one reading the clause would suppose that it applied only to districts where the Counties Act is suspended. But, supposing it to be as the Minister says, and that there was a petition from a hundred persons for the granting of a license, why should there be a provision of this sort? Why should not the local Committee grant it? They are quite as capable of dealing with the question as the Minister, and, in-

deed, infinitely better. And, then, I do not think the Minister himself can grant the license, for he cannot override the provisions of the Act, which says that, unless there are seven hundred more people in the riding or district than there were before the Act came into force, no license can be granted. It is, to my mind, a great objection to the Bill. I am willing to admit that this is a very much better measure than that introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua, and I give the Government every credit for bringing it in, and for taking the matter up in a straightforward and honest way. Credit for having forced it on the Government is also due to the honourable member for Inangahua. But I am still very strongly of opinion that the present Act, if administered strictly and fairly, would provide all that is necessary; and if that case at Sydenham had not cropped up there would have been no demand for this Bill. I think that the whole question of the licensing-laws should have been relegated to the people at the next elections, when they could have given their opinion upon them, and the House would have had to give effect to it. I shall, however, vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. DUTHIE.—Like the honourable gentleman who has just sat down, I acknowledge the effort the Government have made to deal with this difficult and involved problem. Still, I regret that they have forced a debate on us at so early a period after the introduction of the measure. It was only yesterday afternoon that the Bill was circulated, and we have only had a few hours to consider it. In the case of an important measure of this kind, we require some time to study it, and I do not think the Government are going to save time by forcing on the second reading. I am afraid that the result will be that there will be a further debate on the motion for the committal of the Bill; so that, instead of the measure being dealt with thoroughly on the second reading, there will be two broken debates. If the Government had considered that fair allowance should be made to honourable members, and had given us a reasonable time to consider the Bill, it would have been far better. The Bill mainly turns on clause 15; and who can, in a few hours, study the effect of that very extraordinary clause? In so far as my opinion goes I should expect that under the provisions of that clause there would never be a publichouse closed in this colony. However, I will deal with that later on. The Minister, in introducing this Bill, was pleased to boast that he was to lead, and not to be led; but we must recognise the fact that he was driven into bringing in this Bill. It was not brought in of his own free-will, but it was forced upon him by the House, and to that extent he has been led. Last year I introduced an amendment to the Bill of the honourable member for Parnell, calling upon the Government to introduce a general measure; but I was defeated on that amendment, and that by the temperance section of the House. The country from all sides was calling for a measure dealing with the liquor

traffic. The Government have now had to take it up. A stronger man than myself has called upon them to do so, and they have had to do it. I voted with the Government the other night on the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua, because I thought it was the duty of the Government to deal with an important question such as this, and felt sure that it was only the Government who could carry it through. Therefore I supported the Government in reporting progress on the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua, holding that it was their duty to deal with the matter, and that that was the only course by which it could be properly dealt with. There is no greater question before the country at the present time than this liquor-control question. For my own part, although I do not belong to, and am not to be coerced by, any section of the temperance party,—nor am I influenced by those interested in the liquor traffic,—still, I claim to be as desirous of promoting temperance as any one, and so far as this Bill goes in that direction it shall have my hearty support. The provision of the direct veto I hold to be good, and before ever it became a "cry" I spoke in favour of it. I do so now; but I do not agree with the honourable member for Inangahua that it is to be regarded as a question of Liberalism, and of trusting the people. Such expressions are mere claptrap. In my opinion, this appeal to the people will have a great influence in the direction of inducing the good conduct of publichouses. At present, so long as a hotelkeeper keeps within the law, although his house may be doing great moral harm in the neighbourhood in which it is situated, you cannot get at him, because it is seldom possible for the police to get conclusive evidence against him in Court. The case almost invariably breaks down, and we see the same amount of drunkenness still created. I hope that the fact of this appeal to the public will convince the publican that it is not to his interest to create drunkards, but that he must conduct his house in accordance with the moral convictions of the people, because to them the appeal will now be made. I repeat that this direct veto, giving such an appeal directly to the people, will make publicans conduct their houses with more regard to consequences, and see that it is not to their interest to create drunkards. In glancing over this measure, I see that there are various aspects in which it falls short. There is the question of confirmed drunkards. Although the present Act deals with the man who has been before the Police Court frequently, and has a prohibition order against him, still I do not think, as I have before pointed out in this House, that we should wait so long as that. I think there should be proceedings at an earlier stage when men are wasting their substance, and ruining their families, by drinking to excess. There are frequent cases where, on the application of wives, prohibition orders might, with great advantage, be granted *in camera* against husbands falling into dissolute ways. We should not wait till men are so

Mr. Duthie

degraded and ruined by the effects of liquor that they are really incurable. Before that stage is reached the country ought to step in and see that a check is put upon the publican who conducts his business so as to create this evil. Provision ought to be made for cases of this sort. Then, as to this question of tied houses, the licensed holder finds it to his interest to sell all the liquor he can, irrespective of the effects; and I think the House ought to deal with that in this Bill. Then, there is an omission in this Bill so far as the transfer of licenses to other buildings is concerned. For instance, I think we all admit that it is undesirable that there should be an increase of licenses—no one seeks that; but take such a city as Wellington, where it is incumbent that houses of the best class should exist to provide for the accommodation of the travelling public. It may happen that the accommodation afforded by a particular building is altogether insufficient for the travelling public, but under the Bill the licensee would not be able to get a license for other premises—no new license can be issued: there ought, therefore, to be provision made in a Bill of this sort that existing licenses can be transferred to a new building.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is already provided for in the present Act, and it is not interfered with. A license can be transferred from one place to another.

Mr. DUTHIE.—I can only say, if I make a mistake, it must be ascribed to the shortness of time honourable members have had to look through the clauses. Coming to the Bill itself, I do not see any good in continuing these Licensing Committees. It has been stated by the honourable member for Wakatipu that the cost is very great: he says £20,000. I have turned up the estimates, and I find the amount provided for the cost of the general elections is £10,000, and that is a cost which might under the present Bill be very well saved. Now that the question of the increase or decrease is made a direct question for the electors, I do not see that it is necessary to elect Committees for such a purpose. I think the mere administration of the law dealing with infringements of the Act, and transfers, could be carried out by Resident Magistrates, —who will have experience and special knowledge in the matter from the cases which come before them,—or, as formerly, by nominated Committees. Then, there is a provision—section 10—dealing with licenses held by women. It is a very harsh proposal indeed. I think, probably, it would be well if no new licenses were issued to women, unless it be in the case of a widow on the death of her husband, a licensee. But you are going to ruin those women now engaged in the occupation, and that, I think, is a very harsh proceeding. If those women now holding licenses should infringe the Act, or misconduct their houses, the provisions of the law will check that, and existing licenses will die out; but to withdraw licenses from women who have invested their money in the business is taking an ex-

treame and uncalled-for step. I have in my mind one or two cases, in one of which a woman has brought up a family most respectably; and now, in her old age, she is to be ruined!

Mr. SEDDON.—She is entitled to go on.

Mr. DUTHIE.—She is entitled to go on if she is a widow; but this woman's husband has deserted her, and has been away for many years.

Mr. SEDDON.—Let her get a protection order.

Mr. DUTHIE.—Few women like to go to the Court and expose their domestic matters and apply for protection orders. I think there are strong public grounds why these people should not be interfered with. The underlying principle I quite approve of—that it would be well if licenses in the future were not issued to women. It is not an occupation which it is desirable for a woman to embark in. Without wishing to take up the time of the House, I should like to refer to clause 15. I have already said that more than a bare majority at the poll should be necessary before a reduction of licenses should be decided on. The question of the increase or decrease of licensed houses should not rest simply on a bare catch-majority. I wish particularly to refer to the subsection where it is provided that the poll will be void unless one-half of the electors on the roll record their votes. The operation of that will, to my mind, be most disastrous to any friends of temperance. In our experience of polls, even in a hard-fought election, it is seldom indeed that more than three-fourths of the people on the roll go to the poll. The returns of the last election will show that, throughout the whole length and breadth of the colony. The effect would be that the hotel interest would themselves abstain, and at once call upon their friends to abstain, from polling. Every hotelkeeper has numbers of customers with whom he spends considerable sums of money—the baker, butcher, and every class of tradesman employed by the hotelkeepers in carrying out their business. They would be all interested in abstaining from voting, and it would be impossible to get half the electors to go to the poll, and the Act would, under this clause, be rendered inoperative. If a tradesman goes to the poll it will be assumed he has gone there to support the temperance party. He will at once have the publican roused against him, and his trade in that direction will cease. Again, if he abstains from going to the poll, the temperance people will treat him as a marked individual, and his trade will then suffer. Great value is attached by the Premier to the principle of the ballot, but here you have a case where you destroy the secrecy of the ballot. The effect will be that only one section will go to the poll, and the other section will abstain: it will not be a question of the individual opinion as regards temperance, but the whole interests of trade, and the personal interests of individuals. I think the proposal as to a decrease of one-fourth in number of licenses is a very exceptional proposal to at once set

about; and I hope the Premier will agree to a reduction in Committee. I do not think that, at any rate in any of the country districts, the number of hotels is so much in excess of the requirements of the travelling public that you can possibly reduce them so greatly. I have one or two further clauses marked, but I will not take up the time of the House any further. I approve of the main principles of the Bill, but I think the subsection relating to half the electors voting, in the 15th clause, ought to be removed from the Bill, and I trust that in Committee that section will be expunged from the clause.

Mr. MCGOWAN.—I should like to say, Sir, that the objections so far raised to this Bill can be very fairly and easily dealt with in Committee. This is a large question, and I think the House recognises that the time has come when it must be dealt with. It affects very materially our social life on the one side, and large mercantile and financial questions on the other side, and upon that account it is necessary that it should be dealt with in an equitable and fair manner. If we had a Bill brought down by one section—the section, perhaps, of whom my honourable friend the member for Inangahua is the leader—that Bill would only give satisfaction to a section of the community. Then, if we had a Bill brought down by the other section, that Bill would only give satisfaction to another portion of the community. Now, this, on the part of the Government, is an attempt to bring in a Bill to, as far as they can, satisfy all parties, and on that account I shall give it my support. There are many points in detail which many of us may not agree with, but at the same time the main point is the recognition of the principle involved; and the Government have drafted an exceedingly good measure, so far as they have had time to do so. I think they are deserving of great credit for bringing down such a measure, and upon that ground it will have my support.

Mr. BLAKE.—I do not intend to occupy the time of the House more than a few minutes, but I have not heard any speaker, since the Premier introduced the Bill, make any reference to what he said—that there should be no change, whatever circumstances may arise, for three years. That seems to me a very curious part of the Bill—that, no matter what may happen, no change should be made for three years. Many things may spring up; and why should the people not be trusted for the next three years as well as be trusted afterwards? It is quite likely that in three years the people may be tired of this measure. The honourable member for Inangahua says he is very nearly tired of it now, if the 15th clause is to be carried; and we cannot say who may not be tired of it in three years. We do not know what circumstances may arise in the meantime: we may even want a publichouse on the Cheviot Estate: that will be very necessary, perhaps, if there are to be so many people settled on it as the Minister of Lands says there will be; and I do not see how, in that case, the people

will get on without some sort of accommodation. As to the number of inhabitants—seven hundred—I think that is very much too large. As that clause is drafted, I think, if a hundred people signed a requisition for a new license, that should be sufficient to say that a license was needed, especially if the Licensing Committee concurred in the opinion. I do not think it necessary for me to run through the Bill. I do not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but there are many things I shall vote against if moved in Committee. One thing I may mention: I do not see why a wine merchant should not have as much right to be one of the Committee as a man who had been running about the streets saying he would ruin a certain number of people if he got elected; because I have heard men do that, and I happen to live in a part of the world where that has been carried on. I do not see why a man in business as a wine merchant has not quite as much right to be on the Committee as a man of that particular stamp, who would ruin any one to carry out his own "fads." I do not think I shall say any more about it, because so many points have been touched upon by other speakers, and there is no use reiterating objections. I mentioned the three years because no one else has done so. I can see plenty of subjects in the Bill for talk. I am one of those who believe that it would be much better for clubs to pay a license, and I believe that good clubs would willingly pay a license. They are a sort of private institution, and there would be very little necessity for supervision. If you were to close three publichouses and get three clubs, as you would in Wellington, the lowering of the revenue would not be so great, and the many would not have to pay for the vagaries of the few. I shall vote against some of the clauses of the Bill in Committee.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, from the very long discussion on this Bill it seems to me that this is something like an attempt to deal with the question from a practical point of view. I think some of those who have been criticizing the Bill should consult the *Evening Post* and read a very important leading article. This is an important point that I should like to draw attention to. The writer says,—

"As the Bill stands, not more than a fourth of the licenses are to be cancelled. Even under this, however, if the bare majority were to rule, the whole of the licensed houses in a district could be closed in twelve years, after four triennial polls."

Well, I say, if a continuous majority like to carry out this in twelve years, they have a perfect right to do so. That is the principle; that is what we are striving for—that the people should have the right; and surely if they take a vote for, say, twelve years, that is a reliable indication of the mind of the people—that they do not want these places at all. Then he writes about a club—the sanctity of a club. I do not know whether he belongs to this grand institution in Wellington, the aristocratic Wellington Club. I trust that institutions of that kind, although they are

patronised by the nobility, will come under the operation of the Bill the same as working-men's clubs. We must have fair-play all round in dealing with these questions. I trust now, after this discussion, that the second reading will be taken, and that we shall deal with Committee objections in Committee. I am quite sure the honourable member for Inangahua will do all he can to assist the Government to put through a proper measure. I hope he will, because it is currently reported that he is antagonistic to the Government. I am quite sure it is his duty to give the Government every assistance he can.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—Sir, I am not going to speak at any length, and I am not going to speak very much on the question of the Bill at all, because all my objections are Committee ones. I do object to the honourable member for Inangahua, who, whenever he speaks on this subject, does so with bitterness, and looks on all who are opposed to him as being rogues. He cannot speak about anything without talking about bogus votes and stuffed rolls. Does he not know that we shall have the rolls all purged after the next general election, when only those who vote will be on them? How can they get on for any sort of property if there are heavy penalties? It shows a very small mind for a man to be continually harping to one tune, and that is, Death to everybody who takes a glass of beer. The honourable gentleman seems to think we cannot have a proper electoral roll if we have publichouses. If we got rid of the publichouses we should have a more degraded and drunken people, and more money spent, on account of the wretched liquor that would be supplied. The honourable member for Wellington City talked about confirmed drunkards. Drunkenness becomes a disease, and you cannot cure it without locking people up. If you leave them free, and take liquor from them, they will drink other things equally bad. I have seen it attempted. I have seen men sent away to a small island, where they could get no liquor, and I have seen them smuggling in painkiller, under the pretence of illness, and drinking themselves to death with painkiller and chlorodyne; and, if they do not take that sort of stuff, they get hold of morphia and inject it. There is no use talking. We have to meet the question like men, and not in the disposition we now evince. We should not go on abusing one side or the other; and I hope when the honourable gentleman speaks again he will speak in a calmer way. He attributes nothing but wrong to one side, and maintains that everything is right on the other; and I do not approve of that at all. I do earnestly hope we shall pass some law which will regulate the trade; but I do not see why a bare majority should rule. Perhaps it is a wet day, and out of a thousand voters only fifty go to the poll, and twenty-six of those vote one way: Is it ruling by a majority that twenty-six should close all the publichouses, irrespective of the balance of the thousand? No, I say it is only straining the truth to say that. I think a certain per-

Mr. Blake

centage of electors ought to vote. And I think when we get the new rolls they will be better than any have been in the colony before, and we shall have no two-thirds polling, but people will poll almost to a man; and if there are any bogus votes I shall expect the honourable member for Inangahua to have had a finger in it. I can assure the honourable gentleman of this: that if the Good Templars get up to anything like one-half of the inhabitants, or even one-third, neither side will be inclined to let the question go by default, and we shall find the poll full. But the Good Templars do not number anything like the half; and why should they close up the publichouses? I expect to see the day when we shall all have to be one sect of Christians, or there will be no Christians at all—we shall all have to go in for one religion. I cannot understand that feeling at all. While I am prepared to support the Bill on any fair terms, I can tell the Good Templars that no catch-vote will do them any permanent good; it will only throw them back a thousandfold. Their strength must lie in having a substantial majority. If there is only a vote of, say, fifty out of a thousand voters in the district, and prohibition is only carried by them, do you mean to say that is going to settle the matter? Why, when the polls are open again the whole will come to the poll; and there will be a constant surging backwards and forwards; and we do not want that at all. The honourable gentleman may think this is going to be a burning question at the next election. Well, what have we got to do with whether it is or not? The honourable gentleman seems to fear this as if it were a ghost. He talks about it being “a burning question” every time he speaks. It will be a burning question whether we pass this Bill or not. And directly the publichouses are shut up the social purists will want to stop the importation of liquor, and directly they have finished on the liquor question they will tackle on to something else. It will be one never-ceasing fight of one-half of the world against the other half, to take away all social enjoyment or desire to live. It will never end, and the honourable gentleman knows it. I intend to support this Bill, as I think it is a wise one; but there are a few alterations necessary. It is a Bill that will very much improve the liquor traffic, and put it on a better basis. When the Good Templars get stronger they can obtain another advantage, but to suppose that by a majority on a catch-vote they are going to benefit themselves or obtain any permanent good is perfect nonsense. And it is nonsense to suppose the rolls are not going to be purer than they were, now that there is only one man on one roll, and that we are going to strike out those who do not vote. It is of no use saying that the rolls are in a bad state, because before this can ever take place our rolls will be in good order. I think there are some things in the Bill that will work roughly. In the district I represent, most of the publichouses are in Onehunga; in the rest of the district there are only a few. Where I live we have no publichouses, and are not going to

have one; but it is not the duty of us in Remuera to shut up the publichouses in Onehunga: far from it. I say it is not our duty to do it. We might just as well vote to shut them up in Dunedin. That is where the trouble is going to come in. The population in the Borough of Onehunga will lose its revenue; it will lose the publichouses they use, and the advantages it has as a shipping port, where I believe a publichouse to be absolutely necessary. I fancy we shall always require houses for travellers, and, thinking that, I do not see that we have any right to shut up hotels in the manner the extremists propose to do. There are alterations which I should like to see made in Committee. I shall give the Bill a general support, and I hope it will pass and become law.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, there is an old quotation—a very hackneyed one, but one very applicable to the present occasion, and therefore I venture to use it—“A plague o’ both your houses.” Being a moderate man, I am not a supporter of the prohibitionists nor of the licensed victuallers. They are each an insufferable nuisance. Apparently, neither party desires to have the law reformed. The former is not prepared, so we are told, to allow the licensing-law to be reformed, and the publican objects to all reform. The prohibitionists want to create a new law altogether and to control every one else. It seems to me that it was quite unnecessary the law should be altered except in one or two particulars, and these alterations, I think, might have been brought about without any great amount of trouble. It has been said already by so many speakers that I scarcely like to repeat it, that the Bill has been but a short time before the House—so short that I, like others, do not profess to have mastered all its details. But the principle we ought to have in view is the enforcement of the licensing-law; and if the law were properly enforced, my belief is that very little alteration of the law would be required to suppress drunkenness. In this Bill, it seems to me, one of the main features necessary in all reforms of the liquor traffic is entirely left out, which is, that the power which now exists in regard to the inspecting officers in the matter of adulteration is not dealt with at all. The matter of adulteration is really at the bottom of much of the crime of drunkenness, unfortunately not uncommon throughout New Zealand. I may be told that it is not so, but that is my opinion,—that if liquor was not adulterated, if it was not made of poison, which, unfortunately, is now sometimes the case, drunkenness, which is now so common in the country, would be diminished. Therefore, instead of every difficulty being thrown in the way of officers who have the duty of seeing to adulteration, there should be every facility put in their power, so that they might convict persons for having adulterated liquor on their premises. Then, there ought to be at the same time some means devised by which there might be something approaching continuity of tenure to the publican. By so doing you would raise the status of the trade, and, instead of a man who keeps a

publichouse being spoken of as a social pariah, he would come to be regarded, as he should be, as a respectable man engaged in a respectable kind of business. There are two main points which seem to me to underlie the whole question of the licensing-law. One is, Is the law enforced? Does any honourable gentleman who is listening to me now, and does any Magistrate, feel that he has done his duty on every or even on any occasion? Has he not on many occasions rubbed elbows on the one side with a drunken man and on the other side with a constable? Has he ever reminded the constable of his duty? Has he ever attempted to carry out his duty, and endeavoured to suppress the drunkenness immediately under his own notice? I dare say there is not a Magistrate who will say that in one case in a hundred he has done his duty. Let us admit this frankly. And when we preach and talk about the moral sense of the community being shocked, in most instances we are talking nonsense. The moral sense of the community is not outraged by drunkenness, or drunkenness would be put down immediately. There is many a philanthropist who is shocked when he sees a man staggering to his grave through the effects of drink; but there his moral sense rests satisfied; but if the crime of drunkenness were viewed as are crimes of violence or theft, the moral sense would become active, and drunkenness would be put down immediately. We never, or very rarely indeed, endeavour to do our duty in connection with the liquor traffic: but I will tell the House what happened while I was a Minister. During my experience in office my attention was called, indirectly, to one or two cases of violation of the licensing-law in the matter of alleged Sunday-trading, and when I urged that information might be given to me so that I might take proceedings to suppress the violations of the law that were going on, those who were ready to preach so much about it were not ready to render assistance when asked to do so—to assist in bringing the offenders to Court. And also I differ from the honourable member for Wakatipu when he said that shebeens would spring up and sly grog-selling would take place, and that it would be impossible to put it down. I maintain that it would be quite easy to put it down if the officers were not afraid to do their duty. But they are at present afraid to do their duty, because they are afraid they are not backed up by the spirit of the country. If they did their duty sly grog-selling could be put down at once. I had an example of this, and therefore I speak with authority on the subject. A tunnel was being made near Reefton, and I was pestered by deputations, by letters, and, I may say, by members of Parliament, with requests that I would stretch my powers as Minister and give a special license for the small aggregation of people engaged in the construction of that tunnel. I refused to do so. I was told that it was impossible to put down sly grog-selling. The Inspector was communicated with, and he said it was impossible to put down the sly grog-selling which was

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known to prevail everywhere in the locality. What did I do? I was not afraid of a certain amount of odium or responsibility. I turned down the corner of the official letter, and minuted this: that if there were not convictions at once I would change the Inspector and the police officers. With what result? There were nine convictions in a month; and so I say that if we had the courage to execute the law we could make the licensing-law effective, and bring the drunkard into proper order. Now, one word about the clubs. Of course, it is the duty of a Liberal Government to put in a clause about the clubs. It would be perfectly ridiculous to suppose that with a Liberal Government, as the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor) says, the clubs of the nobility and others—meaning, I suppose, the working-men's clubs—should not be liable to inspection. Now, that is all humbug. It is only a sop to Cerberus; there is nothing in it at all. Every club is properly conducted, I may say, practically without exception, and the clubs' laws are so stringent, and are carried out, for the welfare of the members, with such stringency, that drunkenness or improper conduct in a club is almost an impossibility, and does not occur. No Minister has ever yet had charges against any club brought before him, and why therefore we should bring clubs under inspection in order to please a certain section of society I fail to see. There is no necessity for it, and I believe it is nothing but a sop to Cerberus, and should not be done. But it is in this Bill, and so we must make the best of it. Those are the only points I wish to urge on the second reading of this Bill. I may say that I do not believe in allowing a publican to make men drunk, but I am not one of those who will willingly submit to be told by any one else that I shall not have a glass of wine with my dinner or lunch if I feel inclined to have it. That is the position I occupy with regard to this question. Anything that will help towards the proper carrying-out of the licensing-laws I shall be prepared to do, in order that the crime of drunkenness may be diminished. I do not believe in the necessity for prohibition throughout the country, nor is there the desire; and that is the tendency of this Bill. I do not believe that the principle of the direct veto is right. I may be told that we may trust the people. So we ought; but this is a subject of administration. I believe the direct veto will not benefit the temperance party, but will prove to be more in the interests of the publicans. To my mind, at any rate, a Bench of Licensing Magistrates properly appointed by the Government would be more likely to do the duty fairly, dispassionately, and without undue influence, than any body elected by the people in the manner proposed in this Bill.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Sir, I am glad your attention is not drawn to points of order while members are speaking, and I hope that during the course of my remarks not even a gentleman on that side of the House will venture to take your attention from me.

Mr. SEDDON.—Quite excusable.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I have always understood the honourable gentleman to think that what is entirely wrong and immoral on this side of the House is absolutely right and proper on that side. I could not help admiring the Premier's sublime audacity this afternoon. Audacity, audacity, audacity, always characterizes that honourable gentleman. All through this session the Government have funk'd this question. When the honourable member for Inangahua brought down a Bill to give the direct veto to the people, what did the Government do? Day after day they refused to answer questions, and robbed the honourable gentleman for two successive days of his rights, in order that, as they funk'd on this question, they might prevent the question from being brought before the House and the opinion of members taken upon it. To-day we see the Premier dragged at the chariot-wheels of the honourable member for Inangahua, and saying that this question can no longer be shirked, and that this Government is determined to grapple with it. In my opinion, after Judge Denniston's decision last year, it was absolutely necessary that a reform Bill should be brought in. Now, without talking generally on the question of alcoholism, I wish to point to clause 8. It was under a clause similar to this that last year the honourable gentleman and his colleagues tried to open a house in the King-country; and I remind the Premier of an interesting fact in connection with sly grog-selling: At the other end of this district, at a place called Ohingaiti, when he discovered so much drunkenness, what did he do? Unlike the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who told us how he suppressed sly grog-selling, the Premier created a new licensing district, to flood the district with no end of public-houses. That is how he "boldly grapples with the question"! One clause in this Bill I think very unsatisfactory, and that is to the effect that these new districts shall be coterminous with the electoral districts. Within view of this House there is a new electorate called Otaki—a district that extends for no less than 110 miles in length. Now, there is an electorate 110 miles long, and the people at one end know nothing of the wants of the people at the other end; and how they are to take any particular interest in the question of how many hotels are wanted at the other end it is difficult to see. As regards the clause specially mentioned, requiring half the number of people to vote, I take it that if that clause is passed as it stands, then the whole Bill is not worth the paper it is written upon. It will be a discredit to this Legislature, for this reason: At the general election, when we struggle hard and form committees, what is the number of people who record their votes? Barely two-thirds of the people. And that is with hotly-contested elections. And supposing the rolls are purged, if we contest elections, and can only get two-thirds to vote now, and in view of the fact that we are to have women on the roll, and that these women are to go five, six, and seven miles to record their votes, will it

be possible at future elections which are hotly contested to get over half the number? Then, what does it mean? If a few people connected with the public-house trade, or those opposed to any change in the licensing-laws, refuse to vote, voting will become invalid in many of the country districts. Probably there will not be one valid poll in the whole of the fifty country licensing districts. As regards various other matters, I think the Bill as a whole is a good one. I should, however, like to see amendments in the direction I have indicated. I think the question of tied houses should be dealt with. I think it should be provided that no new houses should be tied at all; and in the cases of those houses which are tied, I would give them plenty of time—say, ten or twelve years—in which to get out of that state; but after a given date I think no new houses should be tied. I believe that if publicans owned the houses they would be better conducted, and it would be better for the district. The fact is, when a decent man wants to get a hotel now he finds almost every house in the district tied, and if he takes one of these houses it means that he is more or less the servant of the brewer. I think that is a great evil. I think, also, that the districts should be smaller. I would suggest to the Premier, in regard to the provision that one-half the electors should vote, that it should be lowered; and also, if at an election a reasonable number did not vote, the poll should be declared invalid.

Mr. SEDDON.—What do you call "a reasonable number"?

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think that might be easily decided. As the clause stands now, I venture to say that in the country districts there will scarcely be a poll carried out properly according to the provisions of this Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—I rise to reply very briefly to a few specific objections which have been raised to certain parts of the Bill. Generally, the speeches have been in approval of the Bill. Honourable gentlemen have either admitted that the Bill is a good Bill, or, at any rate, if they have not done so they have declared that the Government had to bring in a Bill, and that on the whole the Government—from the Government point of view—have done their best to bring in a good Bill. I think there is a general consensus of opinion that we have adopted right lines. There are one or two points in regard to which the honourable member for Inangahua and others do not think we have adhered closely enough to those lines. And there has been, I think, one exceedingly unfair taunt thrown out against the Government, and that was the taunt thrown out by the honourable member for Ellesmere when he said that the Government would get no thanks for having dealt with this question, because it was notorious they had not done so until it was forced upon them. Why should the Government be taunted with that? The Government were perfectly frank on the question. Minister after Minister said that he did not consider this session the right session to deal with this question. We reminded the

House that we were elected three years ago to carry out a certain policy, of which licensing reform was not an integral part. Therefore we considered it to be our first duty to carry out our own policy, and to complete it before the next general election. However, as the public and the House had changed their mind, and thought that this question should take precedence, to the detriment of other questions, it was the duty of the Government not to allow a private member to deal with such a large question. Moreover, we said this: that, with all due respect to the private member, we did not consider that the lines on which he proposed to deal with this subject were at all satisfactory. We thought we could deal with it to better advantage in the interests of the country, and we have endeavoured to do so. That is all the credit we claim, and I think it will be admitted we are entitled to that. We have been taunted by the honourable member for the Hutt with trying to delay the bringing-on of this large question. That is absolutely without foundation. It is absurd to say that we prolonged the financial debate with the view of preventing the honourable member for Inangahua from dealing with this question during the present session. The thing is too childish. The mere question was, whether the Government should give precedence to what is the central business of the session—that is, the financial discussion—or whether they should postpone the Budget to let a Bill introduced by a private member take precedence. I say we did nothing unusual, and I repeat that nothing improper was done. But that the question must be dealt with, and would be dealt with by the honourable member for Inangahua, we knew. We admitted that, and we promised from the very first that the honourable gentleman should have facilities for bringing on his Bill. These and other taunts were thrown out against us. Honourable gentlemen first of all upbraided us with unwillingness to touch the question, and then they immediately turned right round and upbraided us for undue haste in bringing it on. That shows the sort of criticism to which we are subjected by honourable members on that side of the House: if we cannot please them in one way, it is absolutely impossible to please them in another. The member for Ellesmere complained that the Bill was circulated yesterday and yet we are asked to deal with it this afternoon; and he defied us to mention any one instance in which an important measure was rushed on in such a way. I am glad the honourable member for Ellesmere has given me an opportunity of mentioning an instance, with which he and his friends were intimately connected. Does he remember what was done by the Atkinson Government in 1889—how they brought down a Bill dealing with the representation of the colony, called the Representation Act (No. 2)? It was an Act of a most important character, and created such a *furor* in the country that the city members to the number of twenty-seven unanimously stonewalled the Bill. Does the honourable member recollect

what was done with that Bill? It was not circulated one day and discussed the next, but it was put in our pigeon-holes at half-past two, and the Colonial Secretary insisted on bringing on the second reading at half-past four—exactly two hours after—and during those two hours the House was discussing other business. Yet when we asked them to stay the Bill for a few hours the Government contemptuously refused the request. Now as to one or two specific objections which have been alleged against the Bill: There is the objection to clause 15. First of all we are told by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) that nobody can understand it, and that if it is allowed to stay as it is at present not a single licensed house will be closed under it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. REEVES.—I am glad the honourable member for Nelson City regards it in that way, because that makes me hope that the clause is perfectly right. What does the clause say? It says that, if an absolute majority of those who vote are in favour of leaving things as they are, then things are to be left as they are: in other words, if a bare majority are not prepared to reduce the licenses, they shall not be reduced. That is the principle of the honourable member for Inangahua—the triumph of a bare but absolute majority. On the other hand, the Bill says that, if a majority of three-fifths decide that there shall be absolute total prohibition throughout a district, there is to be absolute total prohibition; but if there is not an absolute three-fifths majority in favour of prohibition, or an absolute bare majority in favour of the *status quo*, then there is to be a reduction. And work it out as carefully as you may, you can make nothing else out of it. There is to be a reasonable reduction of the number of publichouses—not a reduction of at least one-fourth, as the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) stated, but a reduction not exceeding one-fourth, to be left to the discretion of the Licensing Committee, who are to be elected by a bare majority. However, a triumph of simple arithmetic has been laid before the House. One honourable member discovered that, if the Committee could shut up 25 per cent. of the publichouses on one vote, then in twelve years they could shut up all the houses in a district. The schoolmaster is very much abroad. Do four times 25 per cent. mean that the whole of the houses are to be shut up? It will take a much longer time to close up all the houses than the honourable member thinks. Suppose that in a licensing district there are forty-eight publichouses, and the Committee close 25 per cent. the first year, that is twelve. If after the second poll they closed up another 25 per cent., that would mean nine. That would be twenty-one out of forty-eight publichouses closed in four years from the present time. I do not suppose that in many districts that will be done, because I do not think the majority of the people are in favour of a reduction of so sweeping a character; but that some publichouses will be closed up within the four years I am convinced, and I think it

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would be a good thing for New Zealand that some of them should be closed. It is not merely because a certain number of public-houses will be closed up that this is a step in advance, for that is a comparatively small thing; if no reform were effected in the other publichouses I do not think it would make very much difference whether there were forty or fifty publichouses. But I think the whip which this Act will allow the moderates in any district to hold over the liquor trade will do great good. I say the trade must see now that it will have to bow to public opinion, and this Act will compel the more reckless members of the trade to recognise that opinion. The respectable publican is not a myth—he is a reality; nor are the respectable publicans so few—there are a great many. But the publicans, like every other body of men, suffer from the misdeeds of the few disreputable men in their ranks. Just as a political party is dragged through the mire owing to a few members of that party, so it is with the liquor trade. Moreover, this Act for the first time gives a premium to the respectably-conducted house. The respectable publican who runs the gauntlet of the direct veto successfully will be allowed to retain his license, on the ground that his house is a public convenience, and so long as it is a public convenience he will have some fixity of tenure given him. He is not to be disturbed, provided he observes the law strictly, for three years, so that for that time we shall be placing a premium on the respectably-conducted houses. In these two things the Bill will do good: it will be a terror to those who conduct their houses badly, while at the same time it will reward those who conduct their houses well, and I think in that respect it is distinctly in advance of any licensing-law we have had before. An objection has been raised with regard to the safeguard as to the number of those who vote at the poll—the proviso that the poll is declared to be null unless you have half the total number of people on the roll voting. I own that is an arguable question—the question, that is to say, of the exact proportion of people who should have to vote in order to make it an effectual poll; it is one that admits of argument. At the same time I am inclined to think that the objections raised against it and so freely offered to-night are based on a misapprehension. First of all, those who raised these objections seem to have forgotten that the licensing elections will take place very soon after the general election of the colony, which is fixed to take place every three years. There will be a general election at a period of a few months hence, and in the month of March following that we shall have the first general licensing election. Now, under the new Electoral Bill something like one-half or two-thirds of the names are likely to be struck off after the general election. The whole of the absentees and the bogus votes, as well as the apathetic and lazy people who will not vote, are to be struck off the roll, and you will then have a roll consisting simply of the effectives for the licensing elections that

follow. A period of three or four months will elapse, during which time, I admit, there is a certain amount of scope for the rolls getting wrong, but I do not think that in three months after such a purging the rolls would get very far wrong, and, at any rate, it is simply the duty of those people who take an interest in the licensing elections to do something to keep the rolls clean for two or three months. If they cannot do that, there can be very little enthusiasm on the one side or interest on the other. In order that it may be an effectual poll under the Bill, one-half of the electors on the roll will require to vote. It has been stated that the publicans will simply abstain from polling,—that they will get their friends not to vote, and by so doing they will make the poll nugatory. Well, if the publicans were mad enough to do anything so extreme, just conceive the danger they would run where there is anything like a strong temperance party. How can they possibly think they could prevail upon one-half of the electors on the roll not to vote? Take the case of a large electoral district. Does any one really think that in large thickly-populated districts—not like the present petty districts, say only a mile square, where the publican knows every man he meets—they could bring such pressure to bear on these voters that half of them would keep away from the poll? In an electoral district with a dozen or fifteen licensed houses in it, how can we possibly conceive of the publicans being able to induce one-half the people not to vote? And even if they were foolish and reckless enough to try to secure an abstention of that kind, what would be the effect? They would wake up in the morning after the poll to find that the prohibitionists had carried some districts by a three-fifths majority, because, the publican party not voting, the prohibitionists would not have the slightest difficulty in getting their three-fifths majority. Are the publicans likely therefore to run such a risk as that? I do not think so; and for that reason, I say, the arguments brought to bear on this particular clause are somewhat exaggerated. What would the result be in the cities? Take the case of Christchurch, with which I am somewhat familiar. We will suppose that the women get the vote, and that will mean a roll of some fourteen thousand voters at the next general election. Now, I take it that after the election four or five thousand of these will be struck out. Is it to be supposed that the representatives of the forty or fifty licensed houses in Christchurch would be able to count with any security upon prevailing on four thousand or five thousand people to stay away from the poll?—and, unless they did, they would run the imminent risk of enabling the prohibitionists to close the whole of the publichouses and clubs in the district. Are the people, for instance, who are interested in the social clubs likely to stay away, knowing the dreadful risk they are running by doing so? No, certainly not. On the contrary, I venture to say that, instead of having an abstention, you will have every effort

put forth on both sides to get the fullest possible poll ever seen in the history of licensing elections in New Zealand. I am not going at the present stage to detain the House with any general arguments on the question of the bare majority *versus* the three-fifths majority, but I must on this occasion distinctly and deliberately dissent from the principles laid down by the honourable member for Inangahua. I respect that honourable gentleman as much as any man in this House, I admire him as much, and I am ready to pay him the reverence that is due to the very high position he holds in the Liberal party. At the same time, I dissent respectfully from the position he lays down that no man is a true Liberal who is not prepared to vote for the direct veto by a bare majority. He states that unless you are prepared to do that you strike a blow at the whole system of representative government. Sir, the direct veto by a bare majority is not representative government, and has nothing to do with it. It is a complete departure from the principles of representative government. It is the abolition of representative government, and the reference of government to the instant, direct vote of the people—that is, the referendum. Now, the desirability of the referendum is an arguable question, but I say it is distinctly and entirely a radically different thing from the system of the representation of the people. They cannot be the same. I simply say there is nothing analogous in the whole history of government by representation to what is asked for now—that is, that by a single vote in a single day by a bare majority you should give to the majority going to the poll, though it might be the minority in a district, the power of confiscating a great mass of property, and of imposing on a large minority of their fellows what the latter consider to be a tyrannical restriction upon the way in which men shall live their social life. I do not say it would be a wrong thing if prohibition were carried by a very large majority, or that I should not be at all in favour of it. But I say there is nothing analogous in the working of representative institutions or in the working of our Constitution to this power, which is asked for in the shape of absolute prohibition by a bare majority, by the working of the direct veto. Sir, it is admitted by many students who have looked into the question that absolute prohibition cannot be made to work effectively if it is at all in advance of the public opinion in a district. Therefore I say that, in order to justify it, it should be accompanied by safeguards. That is what we ask you to give. A great number of students and impartial men absolutely disconnected with the liquor trade and who sympathize with the temperance party, who have studied the working of prohibition in America and in other countries, have come to the conclusion that where prohibition is backed up by a large majority of the people it can be made fairly effectual, but that where it is not backed up by the enthusiasm and the assent of a large majority of the people in a district it is not made effectual. So I am in-

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clined to think, if prohibition were carried, unless by a very substantial majority of the voters, it will prove to be, in the words of the honourable member for Inangahua, a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. But I am not inclined to take it that this Bill will necessarily be a mockery, a delusion, and a snare if it does not allow the direct veto by a bare majority, because I say this: that if you study this Bill you will see that it gives hitherto unheard-of facilities to the people of New Zealand for securing a reduction in the number of public-houses in the colony, and also the complete control of the liquor traffic. Now, what are the majority of the people of New Zealand asking for? Is it absolute prohibition? Will anybody stand up here and say so? I believe that if every man, woman, and child in the colony were polled, either through the referendum or the plebiscitum, the vote would not be in favour of total prohibition. Not for one moment do I believe it would. Therefore why should our opponents complain that we are afraid to trust the people? Moreover, if the honourable gentleman's contention is carried out to its logical extreme, the only way of trusting to the people, and securing their direct opinion, is by an absolute plebiscitum extending from the Bluff in the South to Cape Maria Van Diemen in the North. Then we should see how the whole people, divorced from local interests, would vote on this great question. We all know that the majority of the people are not in favour of total prohibition. Then, what do the people want? The people, of course, want something, and what they do want is a reduction in the number of public-houses, and a more effective control of the public-houses than we now have. After studying this Bill, will anybody pretend to say that it does not give these two things? Can anybody show that it does not? If anybody says that it does not, and can prove his case, then I shall say he has made out a good case against the Bill, and I shall be prepared to support him cordially in having it amended.

Mr. FISHER.—Whilst it is not travelling outside the record to offer at this stage some remarks of a general character on a Bill dealing with such a large and important question, I still think it a needless waste of energy to raise a discussion upon this Bill now, for the real, practical discussion must take place in Committee. Any discussion at this stage must be of an abstract or academic character, like the very academic speech which has just been delivered by the Minister of Education. I rise only to congratulate the Government on their prompt redemption of the undertaking to introduce this Bill. I therefore do not agree with the honourable gentlemen who have attacked them on that score; and I do not agree with the honourable member for the Hutt, who charged them with vacillation and inconsistency. Burke once said, when charged with inconsistency, that he purposely varied the means to secure the unity of the end. Sir, those honourable gentlemen in attacking this difficult question are entitled to the thanks of the

people of this country. I believe, with the honourable member for Inangahua, in the right of the people to govern. Surely no honourable gentleman on either side of the House will say that that principle in the abstract can possibly be wrong. I do not hold with the last remarks of the Minister of Education in regard to the question of representation, because, if he is right, then our whole system of representation is wrong. I believe, as I have just said, in the right of the people to govern; and here is a Bill, no matter by whom brought in—and I am not one of those narrow persons who condemn a measure because it happens to be brought in by a particular set of men—which goes in that direction. I say that the honourable gentlemen who sit on those benches are entitled to credit for having attacked this difficult subject in a very efficient way. I agree with the last remarks of the Minister of Education—those, I mean, in which he referred to the non-effective administration of the present licensing-law. As the honourable member for Hawke's Bay said, had the law as it stands on the statute-book been administered in a courageous manner, and in the manner in which it ought to be administered, the necessity for the introduction of this Bill would never have arisen. But here we have the power of the people of the country elevated to the position of importance which it ought to attain to; and I say, whether this Bill passes or not—whether it is left to the elections or not to determine—it matters not one jot, because the broad underlying principle in the minds of the people at the present day is that they ought to have the control of the liquor traffic. There are details of the Bill to which I and many others object; but why discuss them here at this time? There are, for instance, those clauses relating to clubs. I myself am a member of a working-men's club, and I object to those clauses. I agree with the honourable member for Hawke's Bay in thinking that they are a sop to Cerberus. For instance, why should I, being a member of a working-men's club, be turned out at eleven o'clock at night by a policeman, while the Hon. the Minister of Education, who belongs to the Wellington Club—the home of the nobility—may not be interfered with by the arm of the law? If I am to be taken by the arm of the law, I should like to see the honourable gentleman removed by the arm of the law.

Mr. REEVES.—That is what the Bill provides.

Mr. FISHER.—I want to see the Northern Club in Auckland, the Wellington Club in Wellington, the Christchurch and Canterbury Clubs in Christchurch, and the Fernhill Club in Dunedin all included in the same law. If we are going to have a perfect race, let us have a perfect race. Well, this is one of the details of the Bill, and I do not wish to discuss the details now, because this is not the proper time; but I will say this: I voted with the honourable member for Inangahua because I believed in the principles contained in his Bill. I will vote for this Bill because it deals with an exceedingly difficult question in a most perfect and

thorough manner. As to its perfectness, we have, of course, to test that as it goes through Committee. Again I say that it gives me pleasure to congratulate the Premier upon having introduced this Bill to deal with this difficult question in such a thorough and effective way.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I think I must follow the example of other honourable members in congratulating the Government upon the vigorous action they have taken on this occasion. I have also to congratulate them for another reason, and that is on account of their sudden conversion to the principle of the referendum. I should like to see how those honourable gentlemen who voted against the broad principle of referendum will vote now that the question comes before them in this Bill, and how they will reconcile their action. Here is the one principle which they refuse to adopt one day and they adopt the next. I am very glad indeed that the Government have come to my way of thinking. I think it is my duty as a member of the House to call attention to certain omissions in the Bill. There is one omission which must be an oversight, I think, and that is, in not dividing the electoral districts into ridings or subdistricts. The Premier will see that, if he does not subdivide the electoral districts, it will be impossible for him to get members elected for different localities. He does not provide any machinery whatever for electing nine members when he mentions that they should be elected as members of this House are elected. That is a provision for the election of one for the whole district, but an election of nine for the whole will be a complicated matter. How will the votes be taken? Will each elector have nine votes? If so, all the members will be elected by the populous part of the licensing district. The outlying portions will be unrepresented unless we adopt the American ticket-system, which will bring in the other Yankee invention, the "election boss." I hope, Sir, the Premier will bear that in mind, as it is a thing we cannot dispense with. You must certainly make some provision. I would also point out to the Premier on that subject that the division of ridings ought to be specially provided for the different localities in connection with this reduction of licences. In his own district, and in the district which I represent, there is a very much scattered population, and the hotels in some old centres of population remain as before the population fell off, and so are in excess. This is particularly noticeable in townships on the goldfields: the hotels there far exceed the requirements of the population, while in other parts of the country the hotels are few and far between, being in a district a hundred miles long. To have the question of the reduction in the number of publichouses submitted to the population of the whole district, and on the basis of reductions to take place in towns one hundred miles away, would be absurd. Then, again, if the people in the towns, who are very numerous, decided that there should be a reduction, the Licensing Committee would take that

as an instruction to reduce the licensed houses all over the district. That is not very well dealt with in the Bill. The time is too short for considering its working in different parts of the colony. In my opinion it will not apply equally well with town and country, and it will not apply to electoral districts as a whole. If the honourable gentleman wants to avoid that, he should provide machinery by which each of these electoral districts will take the veto to refuse licenses, but each of the subdistricts as to the reductions. The larger the district can be for the purpose of pronouncing as to the closing of publichouses the better. Now, in my opinion, it should be for the whole colony to speak on that question; or the insular division might be used to decide on the question of licensing or no licensing in the colony. There is another thing I am sorry the Government have not seen their way to get in this Bill, and that is a provision that the license-fees shall be colonial revenue. I think it would remove a great obstacle to the solution of the question. The colony could give a capitation of 2s. per head to the local bodies to compensate for their loss. The Premier can scarcely expect that any poor local districts with small revenues will deprive themselves of the revenues derived from the licenses when they see that they can only do so at the expense of increased taxation upon themselves. I think that is almost tantamount to establishing publichouses in the colony, and increasing them if possible. In another respect also the Premier does not seem to have grasped the question fully. Hotels are not required only for the stationary population in the district, but also for the travelling public. I think the honourable member for Wellington City spoke of the requirement in this town of a large hotel better than any here at the present time. It would, Sir, be a ridiculous thing to prohibit in the Bill the erection of a house of that kind.

Mr. SEDDON.—It could be done by transfer.

Mr. O'CONOR.—A transfer would scarcely apply, because in order to get one the builder of that hotel would have to buy another house first and get the license for it transferred. Why should there not be an easier means provided, so that a man could get the license without being put to all that inconvenience? I think this phase of the question ought to be taken into consideration by the Government, together with the larger question of the subdivision of the licensing districts, for I am perfectly convinced that if they do not provide for this matter the Bill will prove unworkable. I would say to the Premier that it is scarcely necessary to appoint a Licensing Committee for a whole electorate to decide what hotels shall be licensed and what hotels shall have their licenses cancelled. I think that if people speak their will on the licensing question officials ought to do the rest. If the Premier will adopt that plan he will save the country a great deal of expense: in fact, he will save the country also from a very great

difficulty, because there are very few people indeed who would care to undertake this duty, if thoroughly impartial. I think, Sir, the Premier will himself acknowledge that his experience in the colony is that the licenses were dealt with better by officials than they have been dealt with since. It appears to me that this Licensing Bill may be made a very great improvement on the present law; but I would ask the Government, when they have determined to leave the licensing question to the people, to leave to the people also the question of what reductions shall be made, and put it to the voters in such a way that they will be able to vote upon it intelligently. I will conclude, Sir, as I began, by congratulating the Government on their conversion to the principle of referendum.

Mr. HARKNESS.—I wish, Sir, to say a few words in connection with this Bill. Like honourable members who have preceded me, I should like to congratulate Ministers upon having introduced this Bill, though I cannot congratulate them upon their courage, for there can be no question that this Bill was introduced with the courage of despair—the courage begotten of an endeavour to maintain the position which they now occupy in this House. I should like, had time permitted, to discuss the main principles of this Bill, which have not been referred to by previous speakers to-night, for the objections which have been raised are principally such as can be dealt with in Committee; but, owing to the tactics adopted in connection with the Bill introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua, it was impossible for those of us who were desirous of speaking on this matter then to discuss this great question of direct veto, because by so doing we should have been assisting those members who were strenuously opposing the measure. I will therefore confine myself to a few remarks on the Bill now before us. As I have already said, I cannot congratulate the Government on the courage they have displayed in connection with their attempt to settle finally the licensing question; and for this reason: that the courage to introduce an amending Bill has been simply the result of consequences. They were forced into the position they now occupy by many of their followers who were determined that this question should be settled during the present session. I maintain that the Government have no sincerity whatever in this matter. I believe that in this city they have a newspaper which is an expression of the opinions of the Government.

Mr. REEVES.—It is not the expression of opinion of the Government.

Mr. HARKNESS.—Sir, I understand that this paper is the expression of the opinions of the Government, in so far as it is specially managed by the Ministerial editor, who is its managing director.

Mr. REEVES.—In the first place, Sir, I do not think it a proper thing to bring up a matter of this sort in the House, and I have before said this session that I am not the manager,

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and have not managed the paper since the session began.

Mr. SPEAKER.—As the honourable member for Nelson City has given way, the honourable gentleman was entitled to make that personal explanation. I understand the Minister to say that he is not the managing director.

Mr. REEVES.—I am not managing the paper.

Mr. HARKNESS.—The honourable gentleman has stated that he is not the managing director.

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable member has not heard me correctly. I am the managing director, but I have leave of absence during the session, and a gentleman in Wellington is managing the paper for me.

Mr. HARKNESS.—I have not a sufficiently analytical mind to understand the difference which the Minister has attempted to explain. But I am going to deal with the opinions of that paper on this great question at the present time; I want to show what the views of the paper were a few months ago when the honourable gentleman was the managing director, and which he cannot deny. These are the Hon. the Minister's opinions on the 16th March last. On that date the *New Zealand Times* says,—

"They have a long fight before them, a fight which, until they educate the people, they can never win. At present the majority is dead against them, and there are no signs of a rapid change. But, while the educational process is going on, both political parties may very well accept Sir Robert Stout's advice to make local option a plank of each of their platforms. That will prevent local option from disturbing the course of politics by drawing an impossible line of division. Local option is, of course, the true solution."

Now, Sir, on the 23rd March the same paper says,—

"The 'direct veto' is fair to all parties. Not the least of its difficulties is that, unless the majority that exercises it is substantial, trouble must follow to an extent which may make things worse instead of better."

Now we come to the 13th April; and then what was the opinion of the paper?—

"What man of temperate mind can endure such fanaticism? What man of practical justice can put into the hands of so determined a minority so powerful a weapon as a direct veto, to the misuse of which they are deeply committed? These be grave considerations in these times."

I maintain, Sir, that between the 23rd March and the 13th April there was an entire change of front in the attitude of the paper which must be taken to express the opinions of the Government on this vital question. Taking, therefore, this paper as indicating the views of the Government, I fail to see that they are in earnest in connection with this very important matter. I maintain that they are not in earnest, because the promise made by the Premier that he would bring in a measure if the second reading of Sir Robert Stout's Bill

were carried was not made in good faith. No doubt when that promise was made the Premier had no conception whatever that the Bill would be indorsed by so large a majority as it was. The second reading of that Bill was carried by so large a majority that the Government had to take up the question, although they were entirely at variance with the principle contained in it.

Mr. SEDDON.—I voted for it.

Mr. HARKNESS.—It is unquestionable that the Government would have objected to take the matter up and to introduce this measure if it had not been for certain honourable gentlemen who support them so strongly. There can be no doubt about that. I say that the honourable gentleman who introduced the previous Bill in this House—the member for Inangahua—ought to have been allowed to go on with it, as his Bill was more acceptable to the people of New Zealand than this will be. Now, Sir, I do not want to enter upon the principle of the direct veto. I can only say that in this matter we ought to be prepared to trust the people, and, if we want the people to help themselves, the best way is to teach them how to help themselves, and to throw upon them the full responsibility of their own actions. I have one or two strong objections to it, which I will briefly point out. In the first place, I think the insincerity of the Government in this matter is shown in the fact that it is proposed to constitute licensing districts coterminous with the electoral districts. I venture to think, from what I know of the temperance feeling that exists throughout the colony, that this Bill, if carried, will put back the temperance question at least ten years. Of this I am convinced, and I venture to put my opinion against that of the Minister of Education. There can be no doubt, if this Bill is carried as it is now, the effect will be that in these large districts we shall get no proper control, so there will be no reduction of licenses throughout New Zealand for the next ten years. If it were not for this and other disabilities, the best feature in this Bill would be the fact that we might be able to reduce the houses every three years by 25 per cent., and thus bring about what the people of New Zealand are asking for—namely, prohibition. One other important provision of the Bill is subsection (7) of clause 10: "Whenever a license is granted after the taking of a poll in any district, the licensee shall have the right of an annual renewal of such license." I maintain, Sir, that we are departing entirely from the principles of the present law—from the provisions of the Act passed in 1881—under which we only grant annual licenses. Of course the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill would say that by giving this right to a triennial license—for it is nothing more or less—he is carrying out the intents and purposes of the present law. I maintain that there is no law existing which gives a licensee any decided right to a license beyond one year. But here in this Bill we are giving a vested interest in a license for three years.

Another thing I object to is that the whole cost of these elections is put upon the local bodies. That was perfectly fair when, under the present system of our licensing-law, only ratepayers were called upon to vote; but it is not quite legitimate, nor is it fair, that the local bodies should be called upon to pay all expenses in connection with these elections. Under this Act we are bringing in an entirely new system of elections. We are not only going to allow men who are on the electoral roll to vote in these elections of Committees, but in all probability women will shortly have the franchise and will be able to vote. Thus all who are on the electoral rolls of the colony will have the right of voting. But the majority of those on the roll will contribute nothing whatever to the local rates. Therefore, I say, when you bring into force this new element in the election, it would not be fair to saddle local bodies with the whole cost. The cost should come from the consolidated revenue. Another reason why I think the Government are not sincere in bringing in the Bill, and do not intend to carry it through, is the fact that they are giving power to the local bodies to increase taxation to meet the cost of elections. This provision is fatal to the measure, and the Premier knows that. In the first place you propose to reduce their licenses, and in the second place you are giving them power to tax themselves to make up the deficiency. I say there are few local bodies throughout New Zealand which are in a position to tax themselves in this way, or which would allow themselves to be taxed even to carry the Act out. Another fatal objection that has been already referred to lies in clause 15 of the Bill. In my opinion, if this clause is carried as it is now, it will render the whole Bill inoperative. I believe that for the reduction of licenses a bare majority is sufficient, and the provision that a three-fifths majority shall be required before houses shall be closed is reasonable, but to add the proviso that half the electors shall record their votes, otherwise the poll shall be void, will simply render the whole Bill inoperative. We are proposing to give the people the power to control the liquor traffic. At the same time the disabilities are so great that it will be impossible for them to keep the control over it that they wish to have if we put in this special subsection. Sir, I do not want to take up the time of the House at greater length. I should like to refer to some remarks made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay. He said that, if we made the trade respectable by additional penalties and a continuity of tenure, the adverse influences would be entirely done away with. Is it not a fact that we have made the trade about as respectable as we can? Yet there is a large proportion all over the colony who think its respectability has not had a beneficial effect, and that we have not improved it one whit by the regulations brought to bear under the existing law. Then, Sir, he objects to clubs being brought under this Act. He makes the statement that there is no need for special

supervision. Clubs are never found out in any impropriety. There is a widespread impression that evils, such as gambling, do exist in clubs. We never find the clubs out in any impropriety, because we have not got the chance of inspecting them. We ask that the clubs shall be thrown open to the inspection of the policeman. The honourable member also told us that it was unnecessary to alter the present law at all. I can only say, from my personal experience, the present law has utterly failed to regulate and control the trade, and, if anything were wanting to prove this position, the decision given in the Sydenham case is sufficient to show beyond dispute that the law is not what we believed it to be. It is possible, if that decision had not been given, the temperance party, as far as New Zealand is concerned, would have been content with the law; but, as the judgment has been given entirely against the temperance party, we ask that the people shall be intrusted with a more direct control of this question. Further than that, I maintain, Sir, there would not have been the strong agitation we have to-day if the publicans had observed the law and kept the regulations. In consequence of the fact that the law has been departed from, this agitation is existing to-day, and the people are demanding that they shall have the direct control. Personally, I shall, with very great pleasure, assist the Government in passing the Bill. But, while supporting its main principles, I will support any honourable gentlemen who may move amendments in those clauses which I have referred to—provisions as to the size of the districts, and especially the subsections of clause 15—making it a workable measure.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, in rising to reply to the speeches made upon this Bill, I desire to express my very great pleasure indeed at the manner in which the Bill has been received. I little expected, when I made the promise to the House that the Government would bring in this Bill, the Government would be able to bring in a measure that would prove satisfactory to all—that it would have met with so much approval as it has met to-night. But I believe that every single member of the House who has spoken upon the Bill has expressed his pleasure at some, if not at all, of its provisions, and has also promised his support to the Government in carrying it through. The speech of the honourable gentleman who last spoke is to some extent, I should say, the only speech that condemned the Bill, had he only been consistent; but, while condemning the Bill in respect to certain clauses in it, which he says would be fatal to it, and while saying that it would not settle this question to the satisfaction of the people of the colony, he tells the House that he is going to support the Bill, and give us his assistance in getting it through. Let me say this, Sir,—

Mr. HARKNESS.—Will the honourable gentleman allow me to say that what I said was, I would support the Bill if certain amendments were made in Committee, but I did not consider that it contained the full principle

that the people of New Zealand were asking for?

Mr. SEDDON.—Then the honourable gentleman admits that the present law is defective; therefore his objections to the Bill are defective also. But I say that the Government are endeavouring to remove the disabilities under which the people labour at the present time. Therefore I do not think I am compelled to thank the honourable gentleman for his support. That is the effect of his admission, and makes it a matter of indifference whether he helps us to get this Bill passed or not. It is such speeches coming from members of the temperance party, speeches that have been made also on the public platform, that cause a revulsion of feeling. When we have an honest attempt made at legislation in order to remove the disabilities under which the people labour, and to grapple manfully and practically with this subject, we find nothing will please some honourable members. I say, Sir, that in this Bill—and the worst the honourable gentleman can say against it is that it is imperfect—the Government are only endeavouring to do their duty in bringing the matter forward. Yet we find this has not prevented some from saying that the Government had shirked dealing with this very important question. I say, Sir, the Government did nothing of the kind. When the Financial Statement was under debate, and when the private members' days were taken, and when the Direct Veto Bill was eventually put upon the Order Paper, what did I tell the House? Honourable members, later in the session, would be given an opportunity of dealing with this particular measure. But what seems to be altogether forgotten is that later on the Government promised—and I made that promise here from the place I now stand to the honourable member for Inangahua—that after the honourable gentleman's Bill was committed, and when the Government brought down its Bill, if it was not found satisfactory to the honourable gentleman I would place him in the same position some other evening in respect to his Bill in Committee as he was in at the time when the motion to report progress was made. How can it be said that the Government were insincere, and were not prepared to give every facility for the consideration of this all-important question? It is unfair now to say either that the Government were insincere or that they wished to shirk the responsibility of dealing with this important subject. It is quite true that the Government did not include a measure on this question in the measures mentioned in the Speech from the Throne; but there are now on the Order Paper a large number of measures which the Government will ask the House to deal with, even at the risk of prolonging the session, because we think they are important in the interest of the country. But as expressions of opinion were given, and we found as time progressed that there were defects in the law that required amendment,—as there had been appeals to the Supreme Court, and as there had been quashing of

licenses in Christchurch,—as all these things were going on, and as the temperance party had been spending some £1,000—most of it taken out of the pockets of poor people—to carry out a principle, while others with means were going more and more to law, and when also we found some three weeks ago that the Government were appealed to by both sides that we should give directions to the police, irrespective of all law, to step in and stop this sale of liquor, although we had the advice of our own officers that we could not do it, because the licenses still existed—when we had all these things going on we felt that we were forced into the position of bringing forward this measure and passing it into law. It has not been the action of any member of this House, it has not been the taunts of honourable gentlemen opposite, that has forced us to do this, but it was because we considered it our duty, in consequence of what was going on, to deal with this important question, so as to remove the disabilities which at present exist. Then, we are told that it is the fourteen gentlemen who generally vote with us, but who voted against us upon that occasion when the motion for reporting progress was moved on the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua, who have forced us to take this action. Let me tell those honourable gentlemen this: that when we consider it our duty to bring forward a measure, and particularly on a subject that should properly be dealt with by the Government, we shall do our duty irrespective of any taunts that may be thrown out against us. I say that the very expressions of opinion that have been given from both sides of the House must convince those honourable gentlemen that they were wrong and the Government were right; and the proof of it is the Bill that is now before the House. Sir, we have nothing to go back from, and we have nothing to express regret for. But I have to thank honourable gentlemen on the other side, too. Why should not they take some credit to themselves? It is not the fourteen who generally vote with the Government that deserves credit, but the nine gentlemen from the other side who assisted the large body of Government supporters on that motion for reporting progress, and who enabled us to bring down this measure which has given such general satisfaction, both in the House and in the country. I am sure that those nine honourable gentlemen voted conscientiously, just as the fourteen voted conscientiously, and as it was an open question I think we have no right to taunt each other on what has followed. To those Government supporters who stood firm and assisted me I shall ever feel grateful. I will now meet one or two of the objections taken by the honourable member for Nelson City. He said that if the electoral boundaries were made the boundaries of the licensing districts it would be impossible to work the Act satisfactorily. I was surprised to hear him find fault with the Government for making those the boundaries, when we remember that it was the temperance party who three

months ago were advocating a change in the licensing system, and suggested that the licensing districts should have the same boundaries as the electoral districts; and now when we, admitting the force of their contention, have given effect to it we find one of those temperance advocates telling the House that it will be unworkable. Why, I say, should they have asked the people to agree to it, and, as it were, converted them to their views, and then tell us here in this House that it will be unworkable?

Mr. WRIGHT.—It is the difference between the towns and the country.

Mr. SEDDON.—I say it is no more unworkable to elect nine gentlemen to these Licensing Committees than it is to elect one gentleman to this House within a district of the same boundaries. That brings me to the solution suggested by the honourable member for the Buller, and that is, that if you wish to have the representatives of an entire district you might divide the district into ridings. If you do that, then comes in this question of expense, which the honourable member for Nelson City told us would be fatal to the Bill in carrying it out. I have given considerable thought to this point, and I believe that when we come to work the measure, and when we find parties trying to work it smoothly and in the interest of the district, so as to prevent what is now going on, we shall find that the measure will work smoothly and well for all concerned. As to this question of expense, what is it? The rolls are already prepared, and there at once is a saving of expense. Look at the number of licensing districts that there is at present, at the number of Licensing Committees, and at the amount of advertising that has to be done. There are now some 413 Licensing Committees. If the Bill passes there will be only sixty-two. I will undertake to say that, with the number of clerks and Returning Officers, and the administrative expense incurred at elections, the expense now is much greater than it will be. You have the annual elections, the triennial elections, and the local-option elections, and many other expenses under the existing law; and, seeing that the rolls are already prepared, I think it will be found that the expense to the local bodies under the new system will be less than it is now. I say that in reply to the remarks of the honourable member for Nelson City with regard to the expenses. And then I say that, even if there were more expenses, if this measure brings the liquor traffic under fair and proper control he should be the very last to raise the question of a few pounds less or more lost to the local bodies. Well, we have had to-night, as we have had on almost all other questions—and to me it is somewhat painful—we have again had this question of the *New Zealand Times* dragged in. It seems to me that honourable gentlemen on the other side are bent on placing that newspaper in the position of the foremost journal in New Zealand. I look at the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie)—I do not know whether he is a shareholder or not, but he

seems to smile very happily, and I know that in his inmost heart he wishes it was another Wellington journal. But I ask, why should the *New Zealand Times* be brought before this House on every possible occasion? An article has been here quoted touching on the question of the direct veto; and what did it say but what the honourable member for Nelson City has contended for? We have been told that they do not want a mere handful of persons to have this veto, and they say, Why should not the ratepayers alone have the settlement of so large a question? Then, when we see the *New Zealand Times* saying that a handful of persons should not have the control, it shows that that journal concurs with the temperance party, who say that it should be settled on a broader basis, and not by a handful of people. That is quite consistent throughout, and that is what is contained in this Bill; and I should have thought that the temperance party would have been satisfied when we not only do that, but take it out of the hands of the ratepayers, and give to the whole of the people a vote on the subject. But we get no thanks, no matter what we do. Have not the people a great deal to do in the selection of representatives? Look at the extent of the districts throughout the whole of South Canterbury, and North Canterbury, and Otago, and everywhere else. And are there not elections as far as the Education Boards are concerned? Shall we be told that those Education Boards are not representative bodies, and that the gentlemen on those Boards do not carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the people? It is true we have the members of those Boards selected by the Committees; but who is it that elects the Committees? It is the householders and parents in the different districts. I see no difficulty whatever as regards the election of members of these Committees. Then, Sir, we were told that we ought to go back to the Resident Magistrates to administer the Act. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay and the honourable member for the Buller advocated that course, and so did the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie). I say No. I say that you would be going backward. You have already got the elective principle. Is it to be said that you cannot trust the people with the administration of the Act as much as you could Government officials?—for, if so, then I say that all your arguments about the extension of the franchise, and extending the boundaries, and giving the people control over this traffic, are valueless. They vanish the moment you confess that you cannot elect nine men, from those who have elected the members to this House, to regulate this traffic. If you have not sufficient confidence in them to allow them to administer the licensing-laws, then I say the people ought not to be trusted with the election of members to this House.

Mr. O'CONOR.—The position we take up is this: that the people should give the directions, and the officials should carry those directions out.

Mr. SEDDON.—But, Sir, there is a dis-

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cretionary power in our licensing-law at the present time, and it was in the exercise of that discretionary power that we resolved upon the elective system. And we are told time after time that we ought to make our Justices of the Peace elective.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. SEDDON.—“Hear, hear,” an honourable member says. Now we have to make our Magistrates elective, but we are not going to trust the elected of the people to administer our licensing-laws. I was rather amused at the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who told us that what was wanting in this Bill, and what was more important than all others, was a provision to prevent the adulteration of liquor. He forgets that this Bill is read with and construed as part of the original Licensing Act of 1881.

Captain RUSSELL.—It is inoperative.

Mr. SEDDON.—Those clauses are not inoperative; they are operative; and I feel satisfied that, with the control we are now giving, and with the extensions we are giving, we shall have sections 174 to 188 given effect to. The question raised by the honourable gentleman is already the law of the land. I am surprised that an ex-Minister of Defence should not have been aware of the laws under which he was working.

Captain RUSSELL.—I am aware of them.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then, the honourable gentleman forgot altogether that this Bill is to be read with the Licensing Act. As regards the adulteration clauses in the Licensing Act, they are still retained. I felt pained at some remarks made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, probably unwittingly. He said there ought to be continuity so far as licenses were concerned. His reason for that was, as he said, that it would make hotelkeepers respectable—we should get respectable hotelkeepers if that were done. I must admit there are a few black sheep; but I do not think it is a right thing to say in this House that a very large body of men who keep hotels in New Zealand are not respectable persons. I say there are hotelkeepers in this colony who are as respectable as any other section of the community, and it is not right to say that it is necessary to alter our licensing system so as to make hotelkeepers respectable. I know that will be resented by very many in the colony. Now, the honourable member for the Hutt endeavoured to be a little severe upon the Government, and he charged the Government, on account of the Ohingaiti District having been declared a special district on representations made, with having been instrumental in opening a number of hotels. Sir, let me tell the honourable gentleman this: that on my visit to that part of the colony I found a condition of affairs which, if described in detail to members of this House, they would scarcely believe; and, despite all that we could do by law, this state of affairs existed. This little township had no less than seven or eight well-known sly grog-shops. Then, where the co-operative works were going on, some five or six

miles further away, there were another three or four; and this is what was represented to me: I was told that the whole community would be with the Government in the endeavour to bring this within limit, if a licensing district were constituted. There was a hotel required for the travelling public. The building was erected, the building was furnished, and the person who owned it could not and would not allow anything in the house in the shape of alcoholic liquor, and the community would not assist the Government in maintaining the law so long as we allowed this to exist. A Magistrate was sent there to report; and what was his report? His recommendation to the Government was to grant a hotel, and then, by the support we should receive from the people, there would be a chance of suppressing this sly grog-selling. We sent a policeman there first, and we had cases brought before the Resident Magistrate, and we had convictions. Some offenders, I believe, were sent to Her Majesty's gaol: and heavy fines were inflicted; but still it went on. We granted this special district, with the result predicted; for now the evil has been brought under proper control. There is no excuse, and this sly grog-selling, and this unfortunate state of affairs we found existing, has been almost banished. Sir, some exception has been taken to our placing clubs under the supervision and inspection of the police and the license-inspectors. Well, all I can say is this: that I do not think the members of any club can reasonably object to this. Exception has been taken, and it has been said by one member desirous of making a little capital as against the Government—and I do not blame the honourable member if the opportunity was given—that the Government were introducing a measure that would affect the working-men's clubs, but would not in the same way affect the Wellington Club. As the Bill is now before the House it affects each and every club in the colony of New Zealand in the one way. There is no exception, and there should be no exception. We have not placed the clubs in any other respect under the provisions of the licensing-law. So far as inspection is concerned, if there is anything wrong done in the clubs, under sections 181 to 184 objections may be taken; and I say that in that respect the working-men's clubs will be the first to admit the right of the Legislature to place clubs under inspection; and, if the other clubs object to it, let them take the responsibility therefor. I am surprised that there should be any objection at all. I think there should be a good example shown: and it ought to be admitted that justice has been done. I must, in conclusion, say a word or two upon the position in which I find things to-night. It is what I should have expected. I find the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) opposing the Bill, and giving, from his point of view, very cogent reasons why the Bill should not be allowed to pass as it stands at the present time. He objects to the provision as to one-half of the votes being recorded

as being unfair. He says, again, as regards the majority, that that provision is not fair. And, Sir, on the other hand, we have the honourable member for Inangahua, who tells us very plainly that, so far as the question of majority is concerned, he wants the power to be given to a bare majority—that, no matter how few votes are recorded, the majority of those votes shall once and for all determine as to whether or not licenses are to be granted in a district. All I say is this: We have the two extremes, one extreme represented by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), and the other extreme section represented by the honourable member for Inangahua; and, when we find both of those honourable members objecting to the Bill, it must be admitted that the Government have struck the happy medium,—that the measure is moderate, and will be generally acceptable to the people of the colony. But, Sir, I wish to disagree—and I take this opportunity of doing so—with the dictum laid down by the honourable member for Inangahua, that to Liberalism and the Liberal party this question is all in all.

Sir R. STOUT.—I never said so.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member said this: that this would be a burning question at the general election—that unless we stood by this question of a bare majority of the votes we were not true Liberals—that Liberalism was gone if we did not insist upon this. I should like to know, as it is his own law, where was the Liberalism, where the principle, in 1886, when it was provided by law that, where roads or necessary works are wanted, where it is a question of putting taxes on the people, as in the case of raising special loans under the Local Bodies' Loans Act, the votes of those ratepayers who do not go to the poll are to be counted in the same way as under this Bill? Parliament, when under the guidance of Sir Robert Stout, in 1886, laid down that principle; and, when an attempt was made in this very Parliament, only last session, to take the majority of votes recorded in settling the question of the impost of taxation on the people, it was refused by a large majority. And I say you may do what you will, but the Government cannot blink the fact that with this question comes a question which affects the taxpayers of the colony. It has been contended that the whole expense of carrying out this measure and dealing with this question should be defrayed from the consolidated revenue of the colony. In regard to that, I would say that, where the revenue of the local authorities and the consolidated revenue are involved, it would be unjust, unstatesmanlike, and wrong if we were to give such power to a mere handful of people in a district. It may be that three-fourths, it may be that nine-tenths of the people are satisfied to allow things to remain as they are. Why, then, should they be forced to go and record their votes upon a state of affairs which they were satisfied with, or else a dozen or more persons—because you must take ex-

trêmes to argue things out—who went to the poll might be given power to settle this important question? I say it has never been done—you have existing laws in proof—and, what is more, it never will be done. I ask the honourable member for Inangahua, what has been the experience as regards the election of Licensing Committees under the local-option clauses of the Licensing Act? It is a fact that very many of the Licensing Committees have had to be nominated by the Government, because the people would not take the trouble to go and elect members of Licensing Committees. Take the records time after time, and they prove what I say. It is not so much that I would ask him to think upon and remember, but I would ask him to remember what has been the result where it has been an increase in the number of licenses that has been wanted. Why, Sir, the publicans have got a few friends to interest themselves, a canvass has taken place, and an increase of licenses has been voted for. An increase of licenses has been given, therefore, owing to the person interested and a few friends joining together to get the vote carried. In other cases the voting has been the other way. We have known some fifty or sixty to decide either to increase or decrease the licenses in a district. And that is why I say there should be an absolute majority in all cases of this kind. With the knowledge that we shall have our rolls purged, and that we shall have complete rolls for the first time for many years, we are justified in trusting the people to deal with the question, and to record their votes in a proper way. I do not know that there is anything more for me to say. I must, in conclusion, express to honourable members the great pleasure I feel at the way the Bill has been received by honourable members in the House, and at the way it has been received in all parts of the colony.

Sir J. HALL.—It was only circulated yesterday afternoon.

Mr. SEDDON.—At all events, we have enterprising journals and journalists in the colony, and the newspapers seem to keep pace with the times. We have a reflex from Auckland and from Dunedin appearing in that evening's newspapers, although it is true the Bill was only circulated yesterday. The honourable gentleman is not oblivious of the fact that there is such a thing as the telegraph.

Sir J. HALL.—And the Ministerial morning journal.

Mr. SEDDON.—Yes; and I have no doubt the Bill was perused there by the honourable gentleman with some pleasure, and I hope it gave him an appetite for his breakfast. I thank honourable members for the manner in which they have received the Bill, and I again repeat that it is with some confidence that I leave it in the hands of honourable members. I believe, as in all measures, it may be necessary to make some slight alterations, but I believe the general principles will prove acceptable to the people of the colony. And if the Bill is passed, I say there will be no heartburnings at

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the next general election. What should be removed will have been effectually removed. And the next election will be fought on fair grounds, and not on unpleasant side-issues, which must militate against the fair and true representation of the people of the colony as regards the general politics of the colony.

Bill read a second time.

On the question, That the Bill be committed,

Sir R. STOUT said he wished to make a remark somewhat in the nature of a personal explanation. The Premier had said that the temperance party wished the electoral districts to be the licensing districts. The honourable gentleman was entirely wrong. They did not wish the licensing districts to be interfered with at all; they simply wished a vote to be taken in the electoral districts at the time of the general election, leaving the licensing districts still existent to elect the Committees.

Bill committed.

PERIODICAL RETURNS.

On the motion for going into Committee of Supply,

Sir J. HALL said that, by several Acts of Parliament, and by resolutions of the House, returns of various kinds were required to be laid before Parliament within a specified time. These had been, in several instances, overlooked, until attention was called to the matter. To provide against such omissions in future, and secure the punctual presentation of these returns, he proposed the following resolution: That it be the duty of the Clerk of this House to lay upon the table, at the commencement of each session, a list of all periodical returns or statements which are by law, or by resolutions of this House, required to be laid before the House, with a note of the time within which they should be so produced.

Mr. WILSON thought this would be a very good time to remind the Premier of another matter. The Public Revenues Act said that the public accounts had to be circulated within a reasonable time after the end of the year. This had not been done either last year or the year before, and he would like to remind the honourable gentleman that this ought, by law, to be done.

Mr. SEDDON said he would accept the amendment of the honourable member for Ellesmere; and, with regard to what had been mentioned by the honourable member for Palmerston in regard to the public accounts, the Government would follow the usual course.

Motion agreed to.

On the question, That the Speaker do leave the chair,

Mr. RICHARDSON remarked that just now the Premier said, in reply to the honourable member for Palmerston, that the "usual course" would be followed with regard to these returns of public accounts. The "usual course" of the present Government had been to refuse to comply with the law on the subject. When he went South before the session he applied to the Colonial Treasurer for a copy of

the public accounts,—which were then printed and audited,—but his request was refused.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

IN COMMITTEE.

CLASS VIII.—EDUCATION.

Lunacy and Charitable Aid Department: Lunatic Asylums, £42,591.

Mr. MOLEAN said the question of lunacy was one which he had given great attention to, and from what he had read on the subject he was convinced that the present system of treatment in New Zealand was not good treatment, and was not in accordance with the treatment accorded to this class of people in other countries. He thought the Government should inquire into the subject, and send some one Home to inquire into the course of treatment adopted in some parts of France. He believed that if the system in operation there were adopted in New Zealand half of the cases treated in the colony would be cured speedily and effectively. He thought the Inspector or some other gentleman should be sent Home to make all necessary inquiries.

Sir J. HALL wanted to know what the item, "Farm, £1,000," referred to.

Mr. REEVES said if the honourable member read the *New Zealand Country Journal* he would find that farming was carried on most successfully at Sunnyside and Auckland, and that was what the item referred to.

Mr. HOGG asked whether the salary of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals, £1,200, included travelling-expenses.

Mr. REEVES said it did not. The travelling-expenses amounted to £100.

Mr. SHERA regretted there was no sum on the estimates for the establishment of homes for habitual drunkards. This was a matter which should engage the attention of the Government. There was a very large revenue derived from liquor in the colony, and, unfortunately, some persons took too much of it, and became the victims of drink. It was well known that medical science had found out a mode by which these unfortunate inebriates might be treated medicinally and reclaimed. He thought it was the duty of the Government to take the matter into consideration. He had placed a motion on the Order Paper on the subject, but, unfortunately, had not been able to take the sense of the House on the question. He hoped the Minister would place a sum on the supplementary estimates, so as to take the opinion of the Committee upon the subject. He thought it was a most heartless thing not to provide some home where these unfortunate victims might be treated medicinally.

Mr. TAYLOR could not understand why invidious distinctions were made in regard to the Medical Superintendents of different asylums. He trusted the Government would place a sum on the estimates for a laundry at the Sunnyside Asylum.

Sir R. STOUT thought there was a great deal in the suggestion of the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Shera). He had been

so impressed with this question that in 1878 the Government had a Bill prepared dealing with this matter—namely, the establishment of inebriate retreats. That Bill was introduced by Sir George Whitmore in the Legislative Council. He thought it was a very cruel thing that men afflicted with intemperance had to be put in asylums along with mad people. Judge Williams had refused to send men to the asylum on the ground that they were drunkards, to be put along with mad people, where there was no place to separate one class of patients from the other. There was no doubt whatever that drunkenness was a disease with many people. They could not control themselves, unfortunately, and, except under some proper treatment, it was impossible for them to get better. He thought, if the funds allowed, there ought to be some institution created to which such people could be sent for treatment, and he hoped the suggestion of the honourable member for Auckland City would be given effect to.

Mr. REEVES entirely agreed with what the last speaker had said, and he would undertake to lay the matter before the Cabinet. He would point out, however, that the erection of such a building was really a matter rather for discussion when the public-works estimates came down. With regard to the question of the honourable member for Wellington City, if the honourable gentleman would give him the particulars he would lay them before the Inspector, and get him to report upon them. As regarded the construction of a laundry at the Sunnyside Asylum, he believed that was to be done.

Mr. FISHER quite agreed with the remarks of the honourable member for Auckland City and the honourable member for Inangahua in regard to the establishment of an inebriate home. He knew of no more philanthropic work which any Government could engage in than that.

Vote, £42,591, agreed to.

Charitable, £624.

Mr. EARNSHAW said that last year they passed a vote of £500 for the Magdala Asylum at Christchurch. He understood at that time that if any other philanthropic organization applied for aid for similar work a similar grant would be made to it. He would like to know if any requests had been received from other bodies performing similar work.

Mr. SHERA understood that there was to be a sum placed on the estimates for refuge-work, to be divided upon equitable principles among the various asylums or reformatories in the colony. There was one in Auckland which was doing very good work, Mrs. Cowie being president. The Salvation Army was also performing refuge-work at various places. He would like to know what was the intention of the Government in regard to this matter.

Mr. BRUCE said he had received a communication from Auckland, from which it appeared that those devoting themselves to this refuge-work were doing most valuable service in Auckland, as they were also doing in other centres. Some years ago, when he was a member of the

Public Petitions Committee, they took evidence in reference to this question, and he then came to the conclusion that the Salvation Army was doing more work in the way of rescuing the perishing in the slums of our cities than all the other agencies combined; and he thought, as the Ministry had given a specific sum to another body for refuge-work, they ought also to grant assistance to the Salvation Army for that work. The matter had first been brought under the notice of the House by the honourable member for Wairau, who last year moved that an additional vote of £500 be given to the Salvation Army; and he (Mr. Bruce) regretted that the forms of the House prevented that from being done; but he hoped that this year the Government would do the Army justice in this respect.

Mr. RHODES would also like to know if the Government intended to place on the supplementary estimates a sum in aid of the Salvation Army rescue-work in Christchurch; and also would they give assistance for other refuge-work?

Sir R. STOUT thought that aid of this character should go through the local Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards. Aid was given in Dunedin to refuge-work through the Charitable Aid Board. There used to be aid given in Christchurch from the same source; he did not know if it had been stopped. He did not think it right that the Government should select some bodies and give aid to them. What aid was given should be given through the Charitable Aid Boards.

Mr. BRUCE agreed with the honourable member on the broad principle of distributing such aid; but the Government, having furnished a precedent and given aid in one case, should not decline to give assistance to another body doing greater work in that direction than all the other bodies.

Mr. EARNSHAW said that last year the question arose in the House with regard to the character of the organization the vote was being given to, and the assurance of the Government to the House was that any other organization carrying on similar rescue-work would, if they made application, and there was fair grounds for their receiving it, receive similar consideration. He would ask the Minister if any body carrying on such work applied for aid, and did the Government propose to put a vote on the estimates for such work.

Mr. SHERA said that, while much might be said in favour of what was advanced by the honourable member for Inangahua as to these refuges receiving some subsidies from local bodies, yet a great deal could be said on the other side of the question. He understood that the Minister in charge had been made acquainted with the fact that in many cases the ladies resented very much any interference by these local bodies. He knew of some instances in which they refused monetary assistance, and preferred to have the management entirely in their own hands. When the Premier was in Auckland, in his public address, if he (Mr. SHERA) remembered aright, he stated that

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it was the intention of the Government to place a sum on the estimates for the assistance of refuge-work throughout New Zealand. That, perhaps, was one reason why there had been no application from the Auckland Refuge for any vote. Had he known there was not to be a sum placed on the estimates he would have taken care to have made applications on behalf of some of the Auckland refuges, especially the Parnell Home.

Mr. REEVES would reply in the affirmative to the question whether any other body had applied for a share of the "refuge" vote. Then, the further question was asked, What did the Minister say with reference to this vote? His answer was just this: that, while the Government would not bind themselves to put any sum of money down on the estimates this year, still, if any vote was brought down this year, it would be distributed among the different bodies doing this work entirely without reference to their denomination. Last year they placed £500 on the estimates for the Magdala Asylum. This year, if they placed £500 on the estimates for the refuges, it would be absolutely without reference to denomination or religion, and on fair principles. With regard to what the honourable member for Inangahua had said about the local bodies and their connection with refuge-work, he (Mr. Reeves) quite agreed that this money ought to go through the local bodies. The difficulty was that in certain cases the local bodies would not recognise these benevolent bodies. They had the option of recognising them or of not recognising them, and sometimes they would not recognise them. In Auckland he had succeeded in patching up a difficulty between the Charitable Aid Board and the Ladies' Benevolent Society, and he believed they now got on very well together. In Wellington there had been a somewhat similar difference of opinion, and the result was the appointment of a Royal Commission; and the ladies were now doing their benevolent work separately. In Christchurch the refuge was distinct from the local body, and he doubted very much whether the local body would have anything to do with the refuge. So he had heard; he did not know whether it was true. All he had to say was that, if the Government placed a sum on the supplementary estimates for this purpose, it would be distributed fairly. The time for the discussion of the matter would be when the supplementary estimates came down.

Dr. NEWMAN said the Minister's suggestion to them to pass the estimates and wait to see what the supplementary estimates might contain was rather childlike and bland. It was a great deal too much to ask. Now was their time. They had a refuge of this kind in Wellington, and what he had to ask now was, whether the Government would bring down a vote for a lump sum and distribute it fairly, because he would undertake for his district that they would demand a portion of this money.

Mr. R. THOMPSON wished to say that, if it was the intention of the Government to bring

down a vote for any such purpose as this, it was a great mistake to wait for the supplementary estimates, or to place the money there. If it was proposed at all, it should appear on the general estimates, as the probability was that many members would have gone home by the time the supplementary estimates came down.

Sir J. HALL said they knew perfectly well why it was desired to place the money on the supplementary estimates and not on the general estimates. In the general estimates the Treasurer wanted to make it appear that the expenditure for the year was being kept down to a lower limit than last year. By this means it went forth to the colony that the estimates of expenditure submitted by the Government were so much lower than those of the previous year. It did not discourage him, therefore, when items which he was anxious about did not appear on the general estimates, for he knew they would appear on the supplementary estimates.

Mr. R. THOMPSON presumed the honourable gentleman was speaking from his own experience, but Colonial Treasurers did not act in that way now.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked if the two applications which the Minister said he had received for votes in aid of refuge-work were received prior to the vote of £500 appearing on the supplementary estimates last year, or afterwards; and, if prior, why they did not receive consideration at that time.

Mr. REEVES thought they were received subsequently. At any rate, the vote of last year was asked for for one institution only.

Mr. MEREDITH was pleased that so many honourable members had referred to the fact of £500 being voted last session for a particular institution engaged in rescuing the fallen. A considerable amount of irritation had been occasioned by what the public considered to be unfair on the part of the Government, in not dealing equally with the various rescue homes and reformatory institutions carried on in the colony. When the question was under consideration on the estimates, the only honourable members who appeared to take an interest in the question were the honourable member for Wairau, the honourable member for Waitotara, and himself, and the Minister of Education. The Minister of Education promised the House that if the Salvation Army, the Church of England, the Wesleyans, or any other religious body made out a good case he would be prepared to take their case into consideration. When he (Mr. Meredith) reached Christchurch after the session he saw Colonel Bailey, of the Salvation Army, and asked him to make out a statement of the work done by the Army in their rescue homes. That gentleman made out an outline of the work, and, with other documentary evidence, handed it to him, and he forwarded it to the Minister of Education with the request to help the Salvation Army, who were just then in pecuniary difficulties: they had some heavy monetary obligation to meet in erecting a large building for rescue-work in Christchurch; but he regretted to

say that up to the present time nothing had been done by the Minister. All denominations should be treated alike. It was a most dangerous thing for the Government to exceptionally treat any one particular denomination.

Mr. EARNSHAW was one of those who did not care what religious body got a vote of this character; it was a most proper thing for the State to give money for the rescue of fallen women. Undoubtedly, if the Government gave £500 to the Roman Catholics for this purpose, they must give £500 to the Salvation Army if they showed similar results, or to the Methodists, or Presbyterians, or any other body. The question of religion should not come in at all. All denominations should be treated alike in this matter.

Mr. TAYLOR reminded honourable members that the Minister had stated distinctly that, if the Government thought fit to place a sum on the supplementary estimates, it would be equally divided amongst all denominations.

Rotorua Sanatorium, £1,161.

Mr. RHODES asked why this vote should appear in one place and the vote for Hanmer Springs in another part of the estimates.

Mr. REEVES said the reason was that the Hanmer Springs were under the control of the Minister of Lands.

Mr. RHODES asked why it was so.

Mr. REEVES said he did not know, but it had been so from time immemorial.

Mr. DUTHIE asked if there was any reason why the Hanmer Springs should be under one department and the Rotorua Springs under another.

Mr. REEVES said the position was, that at Rotorua there was a hospital, and at the Hanmer Springs there was not.

Mr. DUTHIE asked why the hospital part at the Hanmer Springs did not come under the Minister of Education.

Mr. REEVES remarked that there was no hospital there. There was simply a doctor. The patients had to support themselves.

Mr. R. THOMPSON said it was not shown in the estimates what the receipts from the baths were. It should be shown what was the profit and loss.

Mr. REEVES said the fees went to the Lands Department, and were expended upon the grounds and plantations, and so forth.

Mr. DUTHIE did not think he had got a satisfactory answer to his question. He considered that some steps should be taken to place these items under one heading, and under one department.

Mr. REEVES said if the Lands Department would hand over to him what was controlled by the Lands Department he would be quite willing to take charge of them; but he would oppose any proposal to hand over to the Lands Department anything under his department.

Mr. DUTHIE moved, That the vote be reduced by £6, as an indication that the House considered all these votes should be under one department.

Mr. REEVES said that, as this had been

Mr. Meredith

made the subject of a hostile motion, he must say now that it was impossible for the Hospital and Charitable Aid Department to take charge of any vote under the Lands Department, and he could not give up any of his own votes to the Minister of Lands.

Mr. W. KELLY said it would be difficult to place the Sanatorium and Hospital under the Lands Department; but the township was under that department, and the Government had a very valuable property there. Tourists came there from every part of the world, and they complained that proper accommodation was not provided for them. He had endeavoured to get the Government to place a larger sum on the estimates, but had not succeeded in getting them to do so. The place there was managed by a Board nominated by the Government.

Mr. MOORE recommended the honourable member for Wellington City to move that the vote be reduced by £1, instead of £6.

Mr. FERGUS thought, if there were two votes on the estimates, the Minister ought to know what the vote was for, and he begged to ask him for the information.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked what were the terms for admission of an applicant to the hospital.

Mr. REEVES.—£1, or £1 1s.

Mr. BUCHANAN suggested that, to meet cases where people who had very little money to spare desired to enter the Sanatorium, the Minister should approach the Union Company and endeavour to arrange special terms; and the same with regard to the Railway Commissioners as to obtaining a reduction of fares.

Mr. REEVES said the Government found no difficulty in keeping the Sanatorium full even under present arrangements.

Mr. BUCHANAN said, that being the case, further accommodation was desirable.

Mr. SEDDON would draw attention to the promise given to the House by the Minister of Lands the other day, that the question of increased accommodation would receive attention.

Mr. SHERA suggested that the items for Hanmer Plains should be reduced, in place of this item.

Mr. MOORE protested against such a proposal.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Chairman whether it was in order to refer to an item in a previous vote.

Mr. CHAIRMAN ruled that the honourable member for Kaiapoi was in order.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That progress be reported, in order to obtain the opinion of the Speaker on the matter.

The Committee divided.

Ayes, 19.

Bruce	McGowan	Shera
Earnshaw	Newman	Stout
Fisher	Parata	Taipua.
Hall	Pinkerton	
Harkness	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kapa	Richardson	Duthie
Maackenzie, T.	Russell	Mitchelson.

NOMS, 25.

Blake	Meredith	Swan
Buchanan	Mills, C. H.	Tanner
Cadman	Moore	Taylor
Carnoross	Palmer	Willis
Duncan	Reeves	Wright.
Fraser	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Seddon	Kelly, J.
Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.	McLean.
McKenzie, J.		

Majority against, 6.

Motion negatived.

Mr. W. KELLY said the number of baths taken at Rotorua this year was 17,838, and the number of free baths was 5,518; while the number of baths taken at Hanmer Plains was 7,530, and none of these was free. When the honourable member for Wellington City knew that there were so many free baths given at Rotorua he would surely not want to reduce the vote for that establishment.

Mr. RHODES said it was only fair to say that, owing to the large vote given to Rotorua, the unfortunate people at Hanmer Plains had to pay for their baths.

Mr. SEDDON said probably there would be a small vote on the public-works estimates for the Hanmer Plains baths.

Mr. RHODES would, then, not say any more on the subject.

Sir R. STOUT would point out that there were hot springs in Westland, and would like to know whether provision was to be made for them. The Westland people could not get to Auckland, and he hoped the Premier would make provision for the hot springs in that part of the country.

Mr. PALMER said the best hot springs in the colony were situated on the Great Barrier Island, and he would like to know whether the Government were going to do anything for them.

Mr. WRIGHT said the motion of the honourable member for Wellington City was not made in antagonism to the Rotorua hot-springs institution, but as a protest against the unbusiness-like way in which the estimates were brought down, so that it was not possible to find the total expenditure on any particular service.

Mr. REEVES would again point out that it would not be possible to put all these thermal springs under the Inspector of Hospitals, and therefore the vote had to be divided.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought something ought to be done with regard to the Westland hot springs, because, if something were done, then there would be a road made there, and it would lead to some of the finest scenery in the country.

Mr. DUTHIE objected to the item, "Miscellaneous, £150." The amount was a large proportion upon a total of £810.

Mr. REEVES said the £150 was for small articles used in the Sanatorium, such as brushes, towels, soap; and all manner of small things came under it.

Amendment negatived, and vote, £1,161, agreed to.

Department of Labour, £2,755.

Mr. DUTHIE said he had been for about two months trying to get information with regard to this department. He thought no one could cavil at the form of his questions. They were legitimate inquiries into the merits of this question. It was his aim to get this information for the present time, when this vote was under consideration. However, if he was met with an assurance now—which he understood would probably be the case—that his motion would not be further opposed, and that the information would be forthcoming, he would not press the matter at that time. He was quite prepared to take the Minister's assurance that he would give that information.

Mr. REEVES said he had brought down as much information as he could for the honourable member, and it was ready for him. He thought the honourable gentleman was under some misapprehension as to the returns. One point was in regard to the alteration of the word "item" for "head." As to the other return, he understood the honourable gentleman was prepared to strike out the middle portion of it, and the rest was to go unopposed.

Mr. DUTHIE said that meant that one of the most important questions was to be struck out altogether—namely, as to the number of people who had applied for relief to whom the department had been unable to grant relief. That he could not agree with, and he therefore did not take advantage of the honourable gentleman's offer. It was a legitimate thing to be laid before the House. Still, he would waive it if a sufficient reason could be shown, but not otherwise.

Mr. REEVES had had no opportunity of explaining to the honourable gentleman why it was impossible to grant that return,—because it had never come on as an opposed motion, on which alone there could be a debate. It was simply there as an unopposed motion amended, and therefore he could not make any explanation about it. He had got what information he could from the Secretary of the department. They did not keep a record of the people who applied for and did not get work. The Secretary told him the number of these last year was about two hundred. Then, it was not an uncommon thing for people in want of clerical work to come and ask if the department could help them, and they were told that the department could give them no assistance in getting clerical work. But no record was kept of these applications, and that was why he could not lay on the table a statement of the number who had asked for and failed to get employment through the department.

Mr. DUTHIE said that was not a reason for objecting to the return; for in that case the answer could easily have been given him previously—that there was no information on that head. At all stages during the session there had been obstruction as far as concerned the giving of this information. He had not received the treatment he was entitled to expect in dealing with a public department. How-

ever, he had no wish to say a word against the department.

Mr. REEVES said that the first question of the honourable gentleman was a very long one. Still, he did not raise any objection to it, although he thought a considerable portion of it was out of order. The Speaker, however, approached him and pointed out that a great deal of it was out of order, and he (Mr. Reeves) agreed with him, in that it was not moved for by way of a return. He told the honourable gentleman that it was not asked for by way of return, as it should be; and he gave all the information he could grant.

Mr. DUTHIE said it was only the last clause of the question which the Speaker drew attention to, and which he thought should be in the form of a motion.

Mr. REEVES said that what the Speaker did say about the last part was, that it could not be asked for at all; and the requests for information in the other parts were requests for information which should be asked for by way of return.

Mr. RICHARDSON said that, while the Government claimed credit for amalgamating departments, they were at the same time creating new departments—the Department of Labour being one; and the result was that they had a greater number of departments now than two years ago.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said he intended taking this opportunity of referring briefly to the action taken some time ago by the Minister of Labour. It would be within the recollection of honourable members that, when the question of the Catlin's unemployed was being discussed the Premier and the Minister of Labour made certain statements, which were incorrect. The Premier, however, did not use the tactics adopted by the Minister of Labour: the latter gentleman actually stonewalled the House in order to prevent him (Mr. Mackenzie) from replying. Regarding the statements of the Premier, he would say that the report the Premier gave of a certain interview could not be verified when the Premier appealed to the honourable member for the Peninsula for confirmation of his statements. That he (Mr. Mackenzie) held to be a sufficient reply in regard to that matter. In fact, the whole thing was a joke, and arose through a joke made by the Premier at the close of the interview. With reference to the incident in which the Minister of Labour was concerned, he might say that some time ago he wished to get some of the Catlin's River unemployed on to the works in the Catlin's River district, and, in order that that might be done, he waited on the Labour Agent in Dunedin. That gentleman told him that the Government would give the people at Catlin's River an equal opportunity of getting on the work with those in Dunedin, and, at the Agent's request, he supplied him with a list of the unemployed in the Catlin's River district. In that number were included the names of five men, unmarried, and who did not belong to the district, whom he stated to the Labour

Agent he did not consider to be in such need of work. The Agent must therefore have mistaken his meaning if he thought that he (Mr. Mackenzie) desired to get work for these five men. He returned to the Clutha district, and, after he had informed the unemployed at Catlin's River that they were going to have an equal opportunity with the Dunedin people of getting work on the Otago Central, he received word from the Labour Agent in Dunedin that instructions had been issued which precluded these men from being included in the ballot for the Otago Central. He asked the Agent if these were special instructions that were issued for that occasion. He then telegraphed to the Minister of Labour asking him to give these men an equal opportunity with the Dunedin people. He received a very meagre telegram from the Minister in reply, in which he stated that he would make inquiries. In the meantime he (Mr. Mackenzie) remonstrated with the Labour Agent, from whom he received a communication which showed that he thought he had been reflected on by him (Mr. Mackenzie). That was the letter which the Minister had thought fit to attempt to hansomise against him without also hansomising subsequent correspondence which passed between them. He replied to the Agent that what he objected to was the principle which was laid down by the Minister of Labour—namely, that, while, on the one hand, he would not give these men an opportunity of getting work in the district in which they lived, he also by special regulation precluded them from being balloted for work on the Otago Central; and that the Labour Agent had made a mistake when he considered that he (Mr. Mackenzie) had made a request for employment for the men he had referred to. He also said his objection was against the system, and not against the Agent—the system which said that if a labourer from the Catlin's River district went to Dunedin to live, he would get a chance in the ballot, but that if he remained at Catlin's River—where the men had huts, and where there was free fuel—he would have no chance. That was the position he took up. The Minister of Lands was the only one who would look at the merits of the question, and from him he had been able to get the men some employment. He took this opportunity of referring to the incident, as the Minister of Labour had previously, by his tactics, precluded him from replying. Such tactics might be considered smart, but if the Minister of Labour thought he could close his (Mr. Mackenzie's) mouth he was calculating without his host. He had the whole correspondence, and could make quotations which would clearly place the case before the House, if honourable members so desired. He also challenged the Minister of Labour to contradict his statement if he thought himself capable of doing so.

Vote, £2,755, agreed to.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at five minutes past two o'clock a.m.

Mr. Duthie

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 21st August, 1893.

Customs and Excise Duties Bill—Native Trusts and Claims Definition and Registration Bill—Post Office Bill—Banks' and Companies' Accounts Audit Bill—Stock Bill—Stamp Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DUTIES BILL.

Mr. WARD, in moving the second reading of this Bill, pointed out that it was a very little measure, and was intended simply to remedy a defect that had been found in connection with the working of the Customs Act. The object of this Bill was to repeal a provision in the Act of 1888, by which persons importing goods shipped from other countries, and which had paid a duty there, were compelled to add the amount of such drawback paid in such countries to the invoice value upon which duty was payable in this colony. Invoices were now made out at net prices, and neither the importer nor the Customs officer could recognise the amount paid in Australia by way of drawback. The Collectors of Customs throughout New Zealand had assessed the amount to the best of their knowledge: that had been found to be very unsatisfactory, alike to importers and to the Customs Department. The provisions of the existing law were almost unworkable, and it was in his opinion very unfair that importers were now compelled to pay duty on drawbacks which were allowed in other countries. This Bill was intended to remove these defects, and improve the Customs Act in the direction he had indicated.

Sir R. STOUT did not object to the second reading of the Bill, but he hoped the honourable gentleman would not have it committed that evening, because there was a question that would come up for discussion regarding photographers' materials. They had a great number of petitions presented to that House pointing out that photographers were placed at a great disadvantage in having materials charged 25 per cent. whilst photographs were only charged 15 per cent. Fifteen or sixteen petitions were now before the Petitions Committee on the subject, and he thought that legislation might easily be brought in to meet their special case.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that some time ago he had put a question on the Order Paper as to whether the Government would bring in an amendment of the Act for the purpose of relieving from duty planing machinery used in sawmills. He had pointed out that the duty placed upon such machinery was no encouragement whatever to local industry, because these machines were of such a character that they had not been, nor could they be, manufactured with profit in the colony. He would therefore ask the Premier whether he could not introduce a short clause under which encouragement could be given to one of the most

important industries in the colony—the industry of cutting, working, and exporting timber. He was sure, if the honourable gentleman would only look into the question, he could see his way to give effect to this suggestion, and that the relief thus afforded would be very much appreciated by those who were engaged in this large industry, which employed a very great amount of labour, and which, he need hardly say, was doing a great amount of good to New Zealand. He therefore hoped the honourable gentleman would give effect to his suggestion, and see his way to comply with his request.

Mr. TAYLOR said he had also some matters to bring under the notice of the Treasurer in connection with the tariff, if the Government were going to deal with it as honourable members would have them do. He understood that the Government were not going to deal with the tariff this session, and therefore he objected to the suggestions of any honourable members to relieve one section of the community at the expense of the community as a whole.

Mr. FISH said, as regarded this Bill, and the suggestion made by the honourable member for Inangahua, whilst he did not disagree or wish to be understood as disagreeing with some amendments in the law with regard to photographic material, he would point out to the Colonial Treasurer that if he allowed any amendments in the tariff in this direction he must be prepared to allow other amendments. There were several things which he should like to see altered, but he had refrained from saying anything with regard to them because he was informed that it was not the intention of the Government this year to interfere with the tariff at all. The Government should consider the matter very seriously.

Mr. VALENTINE agreed with the honourable member for Dunedin City with regard to alterations in the tariff. If any alterations were made, he in common with other honourable members had two or three things which he wanted to see altered. With regard to the fruit trade, he had received petitions and letters from the Coal Creek district, asking for assistance to protect them against the introduction of foreign fruit, probably from Tasmania and other places. If there were to be alterations in the tariff, the Colonial Treasurer would hear from him on that question. There was another matter requiring alteration—that was, the protection of spirits in the colony.

Mr. SPEAKER said there was nothing in the Bill about spirits.

Mr. VALENTINE was aware of that, but he was only saying that if any alterations were made in the tariff this was one of the matters he should have to bring before the Treasurer.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman might make a passing allusion to what he thought would happen in the event of the Customs tariff being amended, but, speaking on the second reading of this Bill, he must not enlarge upon it.

Mr. VALENTINE said, in that case he would keep his remarks for another occasion.

Mr. McGUIRE said if there was to be an alteration in the tariff he hoped that a reduction in the duties on the necessaries of life would be considered.

Mr. RHODES asked whether any reduction of the tariff was proposed by this Bill.

Mr. WARD replied that it did not deal with the tariff at all.

Mr. RHODES asked what was the proposed alteration in the law.

Mr. WARD said the Bill simply related to drawbacks.

Mr. RHODES said that a few weeks ago he asked one of the Ministers whether the Government would consider the propriety of reducing the tax on wire-fencing, and he hoped the Minister would consider that before he went on with this Bill.

Mr. J. MILLS hoped the Colonial Treasurer would not be persuaded to allow of any amendment of the tariff. If he once opened the door they would be kept there for the next month chopping and changing the tariff.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said if that was the only reason the honourable member for Port Chalmers had to urge it was a very weak reason. He (Mr. Mackenzie) was prepared to stop two months longer, and if there was any prospect of carrying a number of amendments absolutely required in the tariff he was prepared to say three months. He was supported in his desire to remain in the House a little longer to carry out the business of the country when he remembered that the Premier had told them they received £20 a month in order to stay there and do the business of the country.

Mr. SHERA wished to congratulate the Minister upon having proposed such an amendment of the law. The practice had been that duty was charged upon drawbacks allowed in other colonies and deducted from the invoices: that was to say, an importer from Australia had to pay duty on a greater amount than the goods cost him. The proposed amendment of the law would be highly appreciated by mercantile men who imported from Australia.

Mr. TANNER apprehended that honourable members, in making requests for a revision of the tariff, had misunderstood the scope of the Bill. He thought the Colonial Treasurer, in introducing it, might have given the House some account of the circumstances which led to the alteration which the Bill proposed. It appeared to him that the honourable gentleman's explanations were not so detailed as some members required. At the same time, in preferring requests for alterations, most of the speakers had apparently been at sea.

Captain RUSSELL said that, from the way in which the measure had been placed before honourable members, it was no wonder they got up to speak on it without knowing much about it. He defied any one to understand it from the explanation given by the honourable gentleman. He had protested on many occasions against bringing down Bills to repeal

certain words and clauses in certain Acts passed several years ago; which, in his opinion, was a very bad class of legislation.

Mr. WARD, in reply, said this was a very small Bill, and he was very much surprised to hear from the honourable member for Hawke's Bay that he was unable to grasp what was contained in this very little Bill. The Bill dealt entirely with the question of drawbacks; consequently, if there was any very serious drawback as far as the honourable gentleman was concerned it might be excusable. It was not intended to in any way alter the tariff. This Bill dealt purely with drawbacks. A merchant importing goods from Australia received an invoice at net prices—that was, prices equivalent to the Australian duty-paid value, less the drawback of duty received by the shipper in Australia. The object of the Bill was to obviate the necessity for adding the amount of such drawback to the value shown on the importer's invoice. That was as clear as he could possibly put it. In reply to the honourable member for Inangahua, he might say it was not intended by the Government to in any way interfere with the tariff this year. That being the case, the honourable gentleman could not expect his suggestion to be dealt with in this Bill, because, if the doors were opened for alterations in the tariff in the direction referred to, other honourable members would expect to have numerous other points dealt with. As he had said, this Bill was only intended to deal with the subject of drawbacks. He hoped he had made matters clear to honourable members who had criticized the Bill.

Bill read a second and a third time.

NATIVE TRUSTS AND CLAIMS DEFINITION AND REGISTRATION BILL.

On the motion for the committal of this Bill,

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said this Bill had come back from the Native Affairs Committee considerably altered. This being a highly technical Bill, the alterations were difficult to appreciate. But it was not his purpose that evening to refer to particular alterations, but rather to object to a Bill dealing with a part of the complex law as to Native lands being taken apart from the whole subject. This was another patch proposed on the garment of Native legislation, which ought to be dealt with not in that way, but in a comprehensive measure. A Bill like the present only indicated that they were not going to have this session, as promised, a comprehensive handling of Native-land legislation. It was evident, from those little Bills now being brought down dealing with the more acute phases of Native-land legislation, that the comprehensive measure was going to be postponed for another year; for to bring down later on, when the Order Paper was congested with the vast number of Bills being accumulated there—to bring down then a measure purporting to deal with Native lands generally was to repeat the experience of the last five years, when, as they had seen, Bills were brought down when they

could not be properly dealt with, and the matter had year after year to be postponed. He feared very much they were going now to be again disappointed in that settlement of the Native-land question which was so urgently demanded.

Mr. CARROLL was glad to see that the honourable gentleman did not apply his remarks particularly to the Bill before the House; because he might say that the Bill had been considerably altered and simplified in form; and he intended making any explanations which the House required. With regard to the more comprehensive measure referred to, he could give the assurance of the Government that within the next day or two—or, at any rate, within the next week—an opportunity would be given to the House of discussing that Bill on the second reading. Furthermore, there were other important measures which he could also assure the honourable member would not be delayed, as had been the usual practice, till the latter part of the session, but he thought this week would see most of the Native legislation proposed by the Government gone on with.

Bill committed.

POST OFFICE BILL.

Mr. WARD, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it contained several alterations of the existing Post Office Act, and it would perhaps be convenient to the House if he explained it in detail clause by clause. It would be noticed that clause 2 provided for the insertion of the word "letter-cards" in the interpretation section of the Act of 1881. The alteration that he had just indicated was for the introduction of letter-cards. As the result of the Postal Union Convention, it had been decided in many countries to introduce these letter-cards; and, for the information of the House, he might say that, contrary to the existing system of post-cards, the letter-cards would be folded up. They contained perforations, and in the ordinary course these perforations would enable the gummed edges to be torn off and the letter-card thrown open by the recipient. The contents were not revealed to the eyes of the postal authorities, so that one might write in privacy whatever he desired. It was intended by this proposed amendment of the Act to charge for the inland letter-cards the same postage rate as now charged for post-cards—that was, one penny; and twopence to Australia. Clause 8 of the Bill dealt with offensive publications and indecent literature, and in this connection he might say that a very large quantity of this literature was found to pass through the post-offices in the colony. Under the proposal now before the House it was intended to give greater power to the postal officers to enable this class of literature to be stopped, and this he thought was a matter which would commend itself to the House. Clause 4 of the Bill merely gave power to make regulations for the issue of post- and letter-cards, and for the transmission of the same either within or outside the colony. Subclause (4) repealed section 2 of the Post Office Act of

1881, giving the Governor in Council power to make arrangements with other countries for the reciprocal transmission of post-cards; and the necessary power to do so was provided in the Bill, as honourable members would see on reference to subclause (2). Clause 5 proposed to pay compensation up to £2 for the loss of a registered letter. This was quite a new feature so far as the Postal Department of this colony was concerned. It was decided at the Vienna Postal Convention to introduce this system, providing for payment by way of compensation up to the amount of £2 for the loss of a registered letter. As the Bill was now drafted, he might say that it proposed to apply to other than the loss of a registered letter, but when in Committee he proposed to ask the House to amend the clause so as to make it apply to the loss of registered letters only. It was found necessary to do this for various reasons. Its advantage was that it offered security to the public who desired to avail themselves of the Post Office for posting small amounts which did not now exist, and it was found that people were disposed to enclose small amounts in letters without registering them at all. Therefore, if the public were disposed to avail themselves of this means for the transmission of small amounts with no security at all afforded them against loss, it was just as well to enable these people to use the Post Office in such a way as to thoroughly secure themselves against loss up to the amount of £2. Clause 6 of the Bill dealt with a matter which affected the masters of steamers. At present, when a steamer arrived in port her master had to go to the post-office and make a personal declaration there in connection with the delivery of the mails. This entailed upon the master a very great deal of inconvenience, and it was found that, as many steamers arrived in port at a late hour, the master had to turn out early in the morning in order to enable this portion of the Act to be given effect to. Under this Bill it was proposed that the master of the vessel might depute some person to perform this duty for him. He might say that shipmasters for some years past had been strongly urging this change in the law. It was a change which, while enabling the requirements of the department to be fulfilled in every way, would at the same time afford to shipmasters and those connected with vessels a very great convenience. Clause 7 of the Bill repealed a section of the principal Act dealing with the substitution of agents or other persons to take the place of the master. Clause 8 repealed the provisions of the Act of 1885 as to defining the exact form in which postal notes were to be issued. Under the existing Act the particular way in which postal notes were issued was detailed. It was intended to give power to the Governor in Council to say in what form they should be issued. This was necessary, as the present practice was found not to work well. Clause 9 dealt with some forms of postal notes and determined their currency, and provided that, instead of the currency being limited to

twelve months, as was the case at present, there should be no fixed period of currency. He might say this was found necessary in order to give greater convenience to the public. As it was, the expiry of the currency after twelve months had been found in many cases to cause considerable inconvenience to purchasers of postal notes, and agitation had been set afoot in more than one quarter to remedy this. He thought himself that it was desirable that the change asked for should be given effect to in this Bill. The explanation he had given covered, he thought, the whole of the proposed alterations in the Bill, and he would be glad to consider any suggestions honourable members would have to make in Committee. He thought, however, that the proposals contained in the Bill, while not very large ones, would further tend to the usefulness, and convenience to the public, of the Post Office.

Sir J. HALL thought the amendments detailed by the Postmaster-General appeared to be of a useful character; but he would suggest that with regard to letter-cards there should be some definition of what a letter-card was. It appeared to him, however, that this proceeding was a rather roundabout way of effecting what the Postmaster-General had tried ineffectually to do two years ago—that was, to reduce the ordinary letter-postage to a penny. With regard to the last suggestion of the Minister, he thought it was hardly a wise one. At present postal notes had only a currency of twelve months, and it was never contemplated that they should remain in currency as a circulating medium. It was intended, on the contrary, that they should be made use of within a reasonable period. He believed it was the rule in the Imperial Post Office that notes lapsed when twelve months had passed, but they might be revived on application to the Post Office authorities. He thought it was very undesirable to encourage the leaving of a number of these postal notes outstanding; and in that respect he could not agree with the proposed alteration. He hoped the Postmaster-General would consider the alternative he had suggested—namely, that notes should lapse if not used within twelve months, with a power in certain circumstances for the Postmaster-General to revive them.

Captain RUSSELL wished the mover of the Bill would tell them how the revenue would be affected by his proposals. The Minister had not given them any indication of that, and he thought that before they were asked to read the Bill a second time they should be told what the honourable gentleman believed would be the effect of the Bill on the revenue derived from the Post Office.

Mr. WARD said the points raised by the honourable gentlemen deserved attention, and he would deal first with the point raised by the honourable gentleman who spoke last. He might say that the proposals under the Bill would not affect the revenue by way of decrease. On the contrary, if these proposals were given effect to an increase should result. With regard to the proposition to establish

letter-cards, he desired to point out that those cards would be a further convenience to the public in addition to post-cards. These were now issued at a penny, and under the proposals it was intended that letter-cards should be posted within the colony at a penny, the only difference being that persons who did not wish to have what they wrote open on the face so as to be read by any one could put it between two perforated sheets, and close it from the eye. It was to be inferred that those who would use a letter-card would, if letter-cards did not exist, use a post-card. Although post-cards had been very largely used, many people objected to put private matter upon them—that would be admitted. The letter-cards were therefore intended to be an improvement on the post-cards for those who wished to use them. He did not himself, nor did the department, anticipate any loss of revenue from the proposed change. The honourable member for Ellesmere had asked that a letter-card should be defined. The same remark might apply to a post-card; it was defined in the ordinary way as a letter. If there could be any way of defining a letter-card so as to insure its not being too large, that could be done. These letter-cards were used in most postal departments throughout the world, and he thought that this colony would do wisely to follow those countries which had adopted them. So far as the definition of letter-cards was concerned, he could only say that it was the intention to closely follow other countries in this respect. In fact, he might say that the Postal Union, which was a very far-reaching body, and useful to the civilised world, had already dealt with the matter, and they would not go very far wrong in following that body. With regard to the other matter—that of limiting the currency of postal notes for twelve months—that was not what was intended by the Bill. The postal notes now used were sent to country places where there were no post-offices, for the purpose of enabling those who had not money-order offices in their neighbourhood to use them in the ordinary interchange of business; and it had occurred that those notes could not be got back within twelve months. It therefore seemed to him to be desirable, if this great convenience was to be of use to the public—which it ought to be—that this objection, which was a very valid one to those who lived in remote places, should not exist; and the object of the proposal was to enable remote country places to have the full benefit of the currency of those notes.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Minister, with reference to clause 8, which said that the words in the postal notes should be in such form as the Governor in Council might prescribe, and in regard to clause 9, which dealt with extended currency, to say whether it was contemplated that the notes should carry interest.

Sir R. STOUT wished to point out that by the proposed amendment the currency of notes for £1 or £5 was reduced from twelve months to four months. The present proposal said that the currency of all postal

Mr. Ward

notes "other than one-pound or five-pound" should be extended to twelve months. Then, the Act of 1885 limited them to four months. So that these notes would remain limited to four months, and instead of extending their currency it was limiting it.

Mr. WARD asked the honourable gentleman to look at section.3 of the Act of 1891.

Sir R. STOUT said he had read it, and reading the one with the other he had come to the conclusion he had stated.

Mr. R. THOMPSON asked if it was the intention to issue postal notes in any districts where there were banks.

Mr. WARD said postal notes were issued at any post-office throughout the colony which was a recognised post-office. No alteration in that respect was to be made. There was no such thing as an intention to charge interest on the notes. On the contrary, those who required postal notes had to pay the same rate of commission as formerly. The notes were found to be a convenience to those who desired to use them, and they had to pay for that convenience. With regard to the contention of the honourable member for Inangahua that the effect of the Bill would be to limit the currency of notes, he could only say that was quite different from the intention when the Bill was drafted. He would look into the point. The regulation with regard to the form of notes was intended to dispense with a whole quantity of very unnecessary printed matter, which was confusing to those who used the notes. It was proposed to dispense with that, and make the notes plain, so that people could understand them.

Bill read a second time.

On the question, That the Bill be set down for committal on the following day,

Captain RUSSELL said he did not feel at all satisfied with the explanation given by the Postmaster-General. It seemed to him that these postal notes were simply an insidious form of borrowing. He would like to know what difference there was between a postal note and a greenback.

Mr. FERGUS pointed out that the highest legal authority in the House said that the object the Postmaster-General wished to effect would not be effected at all by the measure. He thought, therefore, it would be advisable perhaps to have the committal of the Bill put off to some future day. If the Bill were put down for committal on the following day, honourable members would not have time to obtain information and study the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown.

Dr. NEWMAN thought it was a most important thing, before the Bill was brought down on the following day, that they should have some information from the promoter as to what would be the loss of revenue arising from the Bill.

Sir J. HALL thought the Minister should also have a return prepared showing the amount of money the Government were going to raise in this way—how many notes were expected to be current. This ought to be done

to balance the return asked for by the honourable member for the Hutt.

Mr. WARD said, of course there was no increase whatever in taxation so far as this Bill was concerned. It proposed to levy the same rate on postal notes as was now being paid. He wished to say that, instead of taking the committal of the Bill for the following day, he would ask the House to take it on Wednesday. He would be much pleased to furnish a return showing the number of current postal notes. The intention was not to make any material alteration with regard to Government postal notes. He would be glad to furnish the House with the fullest information on the matter.

Bill ordered to be committed on Wednesday.

BANKS' AND COMPANIES' ACCOUNTS AUDIT BILL.

Mr. WARD said if it was the desire of the House that this Bill be proceeded with immediately he would be very happy to move the second reading now. At the same time he might say that it was his intention to refer the Bill, together with other Bills dealing with banks or companies, to the Public Accounts Committee. It would, perhaps, be convenient for honourable members if he gave a brief outline of the Bill, and then moved that it be referred to the Public Accounts Committee, and asked that the second reading be taken after that.

Sir J. HALL asked, as a matter of order, that that course should not be adopted. Referring the Bill to the Public Accounts Committee might be of some use; but he thought it would be of great assistance to honourable members if a proper debate on the second reading took place. It would be very difficult to debate the Bill when they had had the Bill only since the House met: in fact, he had never seen a copy of the Bill himself at all yet. He would suggest that the motion for the second reading be postponed till next day.

Mr. WARD would suggest that this course might meet with acceptance by the House. He might make any remarks in moving the second reading, and then move that the debate be adjourned.

Captain RUSSELL said he had not seen the Bill, and did not know what it contained, but he had heard that it contained clauses of a very extreme and dangerous character. If the Minister's proposal was adopted, the opinions of the Minister would be promulgated throughout the country, and published in every newspaper. The country would therefore not see what was to be said against the Bill. He did not think the second reading should be taken that night.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the Bill was not even numbered on the corrected Order Paper, and, as no honourable member had an opportunity of seeing the Bill until after the House met, he asked, as a matter of order, whether the Bill could be proceeded with. There were plenty of other Bills on the Order Paper to go

on with, and he believed this was not an urgent matter.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was not contrary to order to proceed with the second reading of a Bill before it was printed. It was, of course, for the House to decide whether the Bill should pass its second reading under such circumstances. The Speaker had no power to interfere with the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading if he thought fit so to do.

Mr. WARD, in moving the second reading of the Bill, desired to say that honourable members would see that there was nothing—

Mr. BUCHANAN asked if he was in order in protesting against this course. The honourable gentleman had not informed the House what the urgency of this measure was.

Mr. WARD said, as Mr. Speaker had ruled he could speak, he would do so. He would not proceed if there was anything dangerous in the measure. The Bill had been circulated, and if honourable members would go to their pigeon-holes they would, no doubt, find it there. He simply intended to explain the Bill now, and then ask for an adjournment of the debate. He did not think honourable members could take any material exception to that course. There was nothing dangerous or urgent in the matter so far as the Bill was concerned, and he would consult the wishes of the House as to whether he should proceed with the Bill or not. It was purely a permissive Bill, which contained no compulsion whatever upon any company or bank in the colony. The object of its introduction was to enable a majority of shareholders of any corporate body carrying on business within the colony to take advantage of the provisions of the Bill and to have an audit of the company's accounts. As honourable members would see, the Bill proposed to place the matter entirely in the hands of shareholders, and there was nothing in the way of an attempt by the Government to impose a compulsory audit upon any institution. It was also intended that one-third of the shareholders of a limited-liability company registered under "The Companies Act, 1882," might take advantage of the Bill to have the affairs of their company audited; or a majority of the shareholders in any company registered with unlimited liability might by the provisions of this Bill apply to the Audit Office to have the affairs of that company audited; or a majority, representing one-third in value, of the shareholders of any incorporated company carrying on mining operations in the colony, and registered under "The Mining Companies Act, 1886," or any similar Act previously in force, could obtain a similar audit. It was very desirable that the shareholders of mining companies should have the power, if they so desired, to have an audit of their accounts made by the Audit Department. There had been many abuses which had crept into the working of companies owing to the system which existed, so that if they allowed the shareholders of those companies to have the advantage of the Audit Office, and have a proper audit of their accounts made,

Mr. Richardson

he thought honourable members would concede that it was a very desirable thing for them to have. The Bill provided that the various companies and banks to which he had alluded might take advantage of the terms of the Bill and call in the Audit Department to have the affairs of their concerns audited. It further provided that any expense of such audit should be borne by such company or institution. Clause 4 provided that the officers of the Audit Department conducting such audits were to be bound to secrecy. The Bill was not of a drastic character. It was not prompted by any of the financial disasters in any of the other colonies; but it was a Bill which the Government thought necessary to place on the statute-book. The shareholders of any company, on being incorporated into a company, if they wished could by a majority under this Bill have an independent outside audit; but he might be allowed to state that it was not the intention of the Government to introduce anything in the shape of drastic or compulsory legislation. The object of the Government was to place a measure upon the statute-book—which would be a permissive one—to enable those who were concerned in the work of any financial institution to have an outside audit if they so desired, or if the shareholders thought it desirable. There could be no harm in that, and he thought it was only a right thing to enable shareholders of such companies to have an independent outside audit if they desired, and if they voted for it. He also thought he should take this opportunity of alluding to an outline of a Bill published in the *Evening Post* that evening. He thought honourable members would see he had a very good reason for alluding to this. There had appeared in the evening paper an outline of a Bill which he might say Ministers had no intention of introducing. They would see this was a very important matter; and he might be allowed to say that the particulars given in the paper purported to be of a proposed banking measure to be introduced by the Government. It was not the intention of the Government to introduce such a measure as there outlined. The particulars that had appeared in the newspaper were, he might say, obtained by the paper in a thoroughly legitimate way, and it was only right for him to say so. It was a very important matter; and he did not think that a wrong impression should be created, as it might lead to a false impression throughout the colony in connection with their financial institutions. The Bill outlined in the paper was the skeleton of a Bill that found its way into the Treasury a short time ago in connection with other Bills. That Bill had by pure accident been given out that morning to a Press reporter. It had not been given out by himself or by any of the officers of the Treasury, but it had been placed with other draft Bills which had not been seen—let alone considered—by the Government. The Bill had got out by mistake in the way in which he now stated; but the Bill as indicated in the paper in question the Government had no in-

tention of introducing, or any similar measure. He might say that they had no intention of introducing any further banking legislation than that now circulated. It was only right for him to say what he had now said, in order to stop any unnecessary wrong impression that the country might have that the Government intended adopting anything in the shape of drastic legislation. He was very glad to be able to say now—though some months ago it would have been very hard to state what effect the financial disasters in Australia might have in this colony—that the Government saw no reason to believe that any such thing as financial disaster could reach this country from what had occurred in the other colonies. There was no probability of this reaching New Zealand. Having now indicated all the Bill now before the House proposed as regarded banking and companies' audit, he would simply ask honourable gentlemen to agree to the adjournment of the debate, in order that they might have a full opportunity of considering the Bill and of continuing the debate on it later on.

Mr. DUTHIE rose to say a few words on the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON would ask the honourable gentleman to permit him to say that it was the wish of the Government to adjourn the debate.

Mr. DUTHIE did not consider the debate should be adjourned.

Mr. SEDDON, as a matter of courtesy, desired to explain that, if it were the wish of honourable gentlemen to proceed with the debate, then the Government would consider the arrangement made, that the debate should be adjourned—

Sir J. HALL rose to a point of order. Certain honourable members objected to the Bill being proceeded with at present, as they had not had time to consider it, and they accordingly wished the debate to be adjourned. But if other honourable members wished to discuss the question at once, he saw no reason to prevent their so doing.

Mr. SEDDON would again say that the Government had intended to move the adjournment of the debate, and they would do so after the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) had spoken.

Mr. SPEAKER said the position appeared to be that the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) wished to discuss the Bill now, and, as that honourable member was in possession of the House, the motion of the Premier could not therefore be put at the present moment. The honourable member for Wellington City could proceed with his remarks.

Mr. DUTHIE said he had no wish to interfere with Ministers in their arrangements for the conduct of their own business, but the Bill before them had only come down that night, although two months ago in the Financial Statement such a Bill had been promised. He thought it a pity that these Bills should only be put on the Order Paper now. He understood the Treasurer to say that this Bill had

not been prompted by the disasters in the other colonies: yet, referring to a proposed Bank Audit Bill in the Financial Statement, they found this passage:—

“Every thinking man will agree with me that in times of peace it is desirable to be prepared for war. The Government, therefore, will propose legislation having a direct bearing upon our financial institutions. It is well to be forewarned by the trouble that has befallen the neighbouring colonies, and I have no hesitation in saying that had those colonies been previously prepared they would have overcome their difficulties without that fearful inroad upon trade and industry caused by the late crisis.”

These words indicated a far-reaching measure, but when they received the Bill it really meant very little. He thought no audit such as here proposed could be of any value. Of the six banks trading in the colony, five were registered and had their head-quarters outside of it. To several of these their business in New Zealand was a very small item in the volume of their transactions. What value, then, could there be in any partial audit here? True, the Colonial was a New Zealand bank, but no one supposed the accounts of that well-managed institution specially needed Government audit. The disasters that had overtaken so many Australian banks were due not to irregularities in accounts, which could have been discovered by audit, but to overtrading and depreciation in their securities and assets. If it was proposed to assess them by Government officers the colony would be assuming a dangerous responsibility. Then, the proposal to audit the accounts of companies was equally objectionable, and seemed to him an attempt to forestall the Institute of Accountants now being formed. It would be far better to let commercial people alone, to manage their own affairs. So far the Government Department of Audit had not been a marked success, as the recent Trust Office investigation had shown. For these reasons it seemed to him that the Bill was totally unnecessary, and if the honourable gentleman was about to move the adjournment of the debate he trusted that he would put this Bill so low on the Order Paper that they would never see it again. The purpose for which the Bill was first proposed, as foreshadowed in the Financial Statement, as the honourable gentleman had recognised had passed away, and as the measure was no longer necessary he hoped the honourable gentleman would not bring it up again.

Mr. SEDDON moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE did not know whether it would be wise to let the motion pass without remarking upon the extraordinary statement of the Colonial Treasurer. That honourable gentleman seemed to be entirely satisfied with himself when making the statement. It seemed an extraordinary story to him—that of the Bill that had been published in the *Evening Post*—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could only speak to the adjournment.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he was speaking to the adjournment. He could not speak to the merits of the Bill; and the best proof that he was not dealing with the merits was that he had not read a word of it. The honourable gentleman had read some other Bill, and, as the honourable gentleman was allowed to say something which did not appear to be at all germane to the present Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER said the only question the honourable gentleman could now discuss was the question of the adjournment of the debate, and the reasons why it should or should not be adjourned.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said this matter raised the question as to whether the debate ought to be adjourned. The honourable gentleman had told them that a Bill had got into the *Evening Post*. He did not exactly know—

Mr. SPEAKER asked in what way that affected the question of the adjournment. The honourable gentleman would have to show that very distinctly, or he could not allow him to proceed.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said it affected it in this way: that the Colony of New Zealand was, like every other community, so sensitive to financial legislation that the mere allusion to a Bill like this might cause a considerable amount of distrust and uneasiness in the colony. The adjournment of the debate was not calculated to allay that distrust. He did not know anything about the substance of this Bill, but it was another financial Bill, and therefore he conceived this to be the proper time to make a remark in connection therewith; otherwise he did not understand why the honourable gentleman was allowed to deal with it at all.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not further discuss that question. The honourable gentleman must keep simply to the question of the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he would defer his remarks to another occasion. He might be permitted to say he felt aggrieved that the Colonial Treasurer should be allowed to make an explanation on a Bill not before them while he (Mr. Mackenzie) was denied the same right.

Sir J. HALL said the Colonial Treasurer, in commencing his remarks upon this subject, appealed to the indulgence of the House to be allowed to make a statement respecting a Bill not before the House. It was only under these circumstances that he did not object to the statement; but, the Colonial Treasurer having been given the indulgence of the House in making that statement, honourable members should have like indulgence, and should be entitled to ask for further explanation on the subject. He wished to ask the Colonial Treasurer whether this Bill, of which a copy was supplied to the reporter of the *Evening Post*, was printed in the Government Printing Office, or whether it was the Bill that came over from Australia.

Mr. FISH thought the adjournment of the debate should be granted for two reasons: the first reason being that it was a most extraordinary course to attempt to read a Bill a second time which had only been placed in the pigeon-holes at eight o'clock that evening—that was an unheard-of thing; and to ask the House to proceed with the second reading of the Bill under circumstances such as those was, to his mind, exceedingly improper. The second reason why he thought the adjournment should take place was that the House should learn the cause of the extraordinary procedure which the Colonial Treasurer followed with regard to the second reading of the Bill. He was about to say that was a very strong reason for the adjournment of the debate, because he thought the House was entitled to further information upon a subject of such importance as this.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON supported the motion for the adjournment of the debate, for the reason that no good could be gained by reading the Bill a second time. It would appear that the second reading of this Bill was not seriously intended, and that it had been put on the Order Paper as a peg on which to hang a somewhat curious statement. The statement having been made, the Minister would probably see that further opportunity should be given for making a further explanation on the subject.

Captain RUSSELL disagreed entirely with the remarks of the preceding speaker. He thought the adjournment of the debate should not take place for the very reasons that were urged by the two preceding speakers why it should. Their reasons why the debate should be adjourned were, as they had pointed out, that it was improper that the other side should not be put to the country in reply to the speech made by the Colonial Treasurer. The debate should not be adjourned for some time, because there were certain honourable members who wished to express their opinions on the statement made by the Colonial Treasurer. It seemed to him that they could not have a better reason against adjournment than that those honourable members wished to express themselves in refutation of the speech made by the Colonial Treasurer, or to elicit a further explanation with regard to this document which had found its way into the columns of an enterprising paper, and with regard to which they wanted to know why it was published, and how it had got there. He hoped the House would not consent to an immediate adjournment, but would allow members who wished to speak that night to do so, and then, no doubt, the Premier would give an opportunity to those who had studied the question to speak the following day.

Mr. McLEAN supported the adjournment of the debate; and he would like to ask whether or not it would be competent for him to move that the debate be adjourned for six months, because he thought the Colonial Treasurer had brought down a Bill which was not required at all.

Mr. SPEAKER said the first question to

decide would be the question as to whether or not the debate should be adjourned at all.

Mr. McLEAN would support the adjournment, in the hope that it would be adjourned for a very long time, and that the Bill would be put at the bottom of the Order Paper from that time.

Mr. FERGUS wished to know if the Colonial Treasurer was going to reply to the question of the acting leader of the Opposition as to whether this Bill was issued from the Government Printing Office, or was printed in one of the other colonies.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE wanted an explanation on the same point. He did not think the debate should be adjourned till they had fuller information on this important point. That was a very strong reason why they should not adjourn the debate; and another reason was this: that the method of bringing forward the business that evening had been of a peculiar order. Now the question had been opened, and the honourable gentleman had had an opportunity of making a full speech in connection with it, and of introducing extraneous matter, they should go more thoroughly into a question which was of such large importance to the interests of the colony as this banking business was. For that reason he would oppose the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BUCHANAN said it seemed to him the proceedings that evening were of a character which required much fuller explanation than they had had so far, and that there must be some reason for not disclosing to the House why this Bill was brought in in such a hurried manner immediately upon its circulation.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must speak to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. BUCHANAN would like to point out that any Government might be able to work a very clever point by following the course that the Government had adopted that night. The Colonial Treasurer, for instance, had moved the second reading of the Bill, and then the House was asked by the Premier to adjourn the debate immediately afterwards, before anybody else had opportunity at all of replying to any statements by the Colonial Treasurer or any other member of the Ministry. The honourable gentleman was thus sheltered by his colleague stepping in and stopping any chance whatever of reply by the other side of the House. It was establishing, he thought, a very bad precedent, which it would not be well to follow in the future.

Debate adjourned.

On the question, That the debate be adjourned to the following day,

Mr. SEDDON said the reason why he desired the resumption of the debate on the following day was that honourable members might have the Bill before them and be able to study it. He could assure honourable members that the Government were not aware that the Bill had only been circulated that evening, and it was for that reason he had moved the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. FERGUS thought it would be advisable, seeing that the Bill had got into the hands of the *Evening Post*, and as it had been printed at the Government Printing Office, that honourable members should have an opportunity of studying it, as well as the *Evening Post*.

Mr. WARD said the object he had in making the statement he had made was to prevent any injury—

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE wished to know whether the honourable gentleman was in order in making such a statement, seeing that he himself (Mr. Mackenzie) had been pulled up for doing the same.

Mr. WARD said this was rather a matter of personal explanation. If the honourable gentleman objected to get information which an honourable member on his own side had asked for, he would not give it. The object he had in making the statement was to prevent any injury that might accrue to the country from an accident over which neither he nor the officers of the Treasury had any control.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh! oh!

Mr. WARD said, as honourable members evidently did not want an explanation, he would not make it.

Debate adjourned to next sitting-day.

STOCK BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said no doubt honourable members could not accuse him of not having circulated it in time. He wanted to advance the Bill a stage, so that it might go before the Stock Committee for consideration. Honourable members would remember that this Bill was brought before the House last session, and they had not been able to get it through in consequence of the opposition offered to it at that time. Since then the Bill had been circulated throughout the colony, and extensively circulated among the agricultural and pastoral associations. The Government had received a large amount of recommendations from those associations, and wherever they had found that those recommendations would be serviceable they had adopted them as far as possible in the Bill. Of course, in other cases the recommendations had not been adopted. They had received the opinions of a large number of persons on the Bill, which, as now brought before the House, he thought, would suit the larger portion of the colony. The Bill itself was principally a consolidation measure. Honourable members who had gone through it would see that it consolidated the present law in connection with stock throughout the colony. If it became law it would repeal four different Acts—"The Brands and Branding Act, 1880," "The Diseased Cattle Act, 1881," "The Sheep Act, 1890," and "The Cattle Act, 1890." It had been found that these various Acts were very confusing, and people throughout the colony who had taken up stockraising did not know what the law was. It was therefore thought best to have one Act dealing with stock throughout the colony. There were four or five new provisions in the Bill. One was

that the Cattle Boards were abolished. It had been found in many cases that the work done by these Boards had been rather against the regulations which had been framed under the Cattle Act, and it was now, he thought recognised by most people in the colony that any outbreak of disease amongst cattle would be better coped with by the Stock Department than by Cattle Boards, as the department had better machinery and a better chance of coping with disease if it should break out. It was therefore proposed to abolish the Cattle Boards and have the whole matter regulated by the Stock Department under this law. Another provision in the Bill was that power was given to compensate persons whose stock might be destroyed in order to stamp out disease that had broken out among them. He had had considerable doubt as to whether a provision should be inserted in the Bill with regard to this matter. However, after mature consideration he had determined to introduce it, and leave it to the Stock Committee and the House to determine whether the provision should be retained. At any rate, he thought the Government ought to have some power in this way, because if disease should suddenly break out in any part of the colony, and the department found it necessary, in order to stop the spread of the disease at once, to destroy cattle, or sheep, or horses, they ought to be able to do that, and it would be only fair to the owners of the stock that they should get some compensation. At any rate, that was his opinion, and it was the law in the Home-country. When the authorities there thought it necessary to stop any outbreak of disease, they destroyed the stock, and the owners got compensation. Of course, as he had said, he had some doubt as to the introduction of the provision, but he thought it best to introduce it and let the House say whether it should be retained in the Bill or not. Another new provision was one making it compulsory to dip crossbred and long-wool sheep every year. Honourable members who knew anything of stock would agree that it was necessary to have this provision, and a large number of associations to which the Bill had been referred had recommended that this should be done. Another new provision was with regard to the driving of stock. It was proposed under the Bill that stock should be driven only in the daytime, except under certain conditions which were set forth in the Bill. He thought this was a necessary provision, although he had no doubt some honourable members would find fault with it. He recollected perfectly well that when the first Sheep Bill was passed this provision was very closely debated in the House. He thought that a great deal of sheep-stealing was carried on through people being allowed to drive sheep at night-time through paddocks, when in the dark it was impossible to see whether the sheep driven belonged to the person driving them or not. If they could frame any regulations to prevent sheep from being driven along main roads with paddocks on either side, except in the daytime,

it would be a very good thing. Another new provision was with regard to the branding of sheep. The present law made it compulsory to brand sheep after shearing. He thought that was necessary, and in connection with that it was proposed by the Bill to compel every one to brand any straggling sheep he might shear. Honourable members who were acquainted with the subject knew that very often straggling sheep were shorn with the flock that was being shorn, and no one could tell where they had been shorn. All that was provided for by the Bill was that these sheep should have a separate brand, showing where they had been shorn. That, he thought, was a necessary provision. Then, there was another new provision proposed with regard to ear-marking. He had no doubt this would be a subject of considerable difference of opinion among honourable gentlemen. It was proposed in this Bill to use a punch or nippers for ear-marking. Nothing was so likely to put a stop to sheep-stealing as to have an ear-mark of that sort. Of course he knew that there would be a great deal of opposition to the provision, but in regard to all such safeguards there was always a great deal of opposition at first. He thought it would be well if in the colony generally the only ear-marks allowed were those made by punches or nippers, which would prevent the cutting-away of the ears altogether, which often made it very difficult to say to whom the sheep belonged. These were the principal new provisions in the Bill. The Bill itself was divided into some six parts. The First Part related to general administration, which was mainly carried on under the present Act; then, the Second Part of the Bill applied to disease of every description, and was mostly taken from the present Act. The return of stock and the rates to be charged were exactly what they had in the law at the present time. Then, the Fourth Part of the Bill provided for mustering and driving sheep, the Fifth Part was in connection with brands and branding, and the Sixth Part dealt with the legal proceedings in regard to carrying out the Act itself. He thought it was only right he should say that he wished this Bill to go before the Agricultural and Stock Committee. The members of that Committee were well qualified to deal with the measure. He had brought down the Bill in the best form he possibly could; but he had no hesitation in saying that he was willing to accept such reasonable amendments as the Stock Committee, and the House afterwards, after full discussion, might think necessary, to make the Bill a more perfect one. At any rate, he thought it would be a great benefit to the colony to have all laws connected with stock—disease, branding, *et cetera*—put into one Bill, so that any person might tell what was the law with regard to branding of stock, prevention of disease, and so forth. He would not detain the House any longer at the present stage. He had simply made these short explanations in connection with the Bill, and now wished to get the second reading. He would then move that it be referred to the Stock Committee,

and he was anxious that it should go there as soon as possible, so that the Committee might have time to give it full consideration before it came back again to the House. He hoped, therefore, there would be no delay in allowing the second reading so that it might go at once to the Stock Committee.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the honourable gentleman had put a Bill before the House which admittedly dealt with a very important subject; and he, for one, wished to express his belief that the honourable gentleman had done so with the very best of objects—namely, the simplification and improvement of the law dealing with the handling of their stock—and if he succeeded in doing that, he would admittedly be doing a great service as a member of the Government. The honourable gentleman had told them that the measure was mainly a consolidating one, and that he had brought it down in the best form he could; and, listening to his very brief remarks, one would have thought that what he told the House was literally true. Any one, however, looking through the Bill carefully, as he (Mr. Buchanan) had endeavoured to do, must see at once that the Bill made very great changes in the law, and the honourable gentleman must know that these changes had been made the subject of adverse comment by people interested in stock matters throughout the colony. Of course all this must admittedly be a matter of opinion; but he could not conceive of any gentleman with the admittedly long experience of the Minister of Agriculture bringing down such a Bill as this. He had no hesitation in saying that one of the first notices in the *Gazette* after this Act came into operation would necessarily be a declaration that practically the whole of the North Island was infected country under the provisions for dealing with foot-rot alone. Why, if the honourable gentleman went into many of the sheep-yards in the North Island and ran the sheep through the arsenic troughs, he would find that in nearly all cases the sheep were more or less touched with foot-rot. The honourable gentleman would certainly be unable to pass any Bill like this through the House this session. He should be very glad indeed to see the possibility of making provisions of an effectual character to deal with this serious trouble, but these provisions, if any, must be of a different character from those provided in the Bill. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman that the question was a most important one, and he (Mr. Buchanan) would rather see scab than foot-rot in every district; but to say that the provisions of this Bill could be put in force was an outrage on their common-sense. Then, there was the question of driving stock only in the daytime. What attention had the honourable gentleman given to the clauses dealing with this subject? In taking stock to market, for instance, where the sheep were in a paddock overnight near the trucking-yards, how were they to truck these sheep long before daylight, as was frequently required, unless they were driven at night?

How were sheep to be travelled without great loss to stockowners in the summer-time, if the provisions of this Bill were given effect to? This matter was brought before the House previously in the Stock Bill introduced by the honourable gentleman.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said he did not introduce it.

Mr. BUCHANAN said it was in a Bill brought before the House, but he was, perhaps, wrong in attributing it to the honourable gentleman; but he felt satisfied stockowners would only on the strongest compulsion consent to any such clause as that. Then, the honourable gentleman referred to compulsory wool-branding. Did the honourable gentleman call that a practical measure? He knew very well that, in the North Island, so strong was the opinion against wool-branding sheep at all that petitions were carried around the country at very great trouble and expense in order to avoid the necessity of doing this; and yet they found the proposal embodied in the provisions of this Bill. Had the honourable gentleman given them reasons of a sufficiently strong character to neutralise the very strong objection of stockowners to this provision? And, in the case of long-woolled sheep, any one knew that it was impossible to wool-brand them so as to have the brand of any value whatever. Take sheep of the Lincoln breed, for instance, and see what the result of wool-branding was at any time. Machine-shearing was now getting to be quite an ordinary thing, and he would like to know what the effect of wool-branding on these sheep immediately after shearing would be.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said they always branded them down South at shearing-time.

Mr. BUCHANAN said such a thing was not ordinarily done at all in the North, especially in the case of long-woolled sheep. It would also involve extra work at a time when everything in the shape of additional work had to be avoided as much as possible. Then, as to the compulsory dipping of long-woolled sheep within the given time, he must strongly urge that on many grounds this provision ought not to be included in this or any other Bill. Why did not the honourable gentleman rest upon the simple and practical basis of providing that stockowners should be compelled under heavy penalties to keep their sheep free from vermin, such as ticks, lice, or anything else, leaving the stockowner perfect freedom as to the ways and means of doing so? The honourable gentleman had not given the House any reason, as far as he was able to understand, for this provision. Then, another provision in the Bill defined a highway as a road which had been ordinarily used by the public for three years at least. What was the reason for such a definition as that? Take the Forty-mile Bush, or any newly-settled district: Why should not a newly-surveyed road there come within the provisions of this Bill immediately on its becoming a legal road? Then, as to the enormous power taken in this Bill to make Orders in Council: He found that, without

regard to whether or not an Order in Council had complied with the spirit of the Act, it gave the Minister power to inflict penalties up to £500 for any offences under it. That seemed a most extraordinary power. Another extraordinary power was that an Inspector should direct such treatment of disease as in his opinion might be necessary. He objected entirely to such a provision as that for the treatment of foot-rot or any other disease from which stock might be suffering. The Inspector's duty should be to insist not on a method, but on a cure. He asked the Minister to consider how arbitrarily this power would be used in some cases by some of the Inspectors. Why should not the Minister, as he (Mr. Buchanan) had already said, trust to stringent provisions of the Act imposing a heavy penalty if the stockowner himself failed to deal with the disease? As to the provision in clause 23 of the Bill, he was glad to say that, in his opinion, this clause could be made a very useful and valuable one. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) had more than once brought before the House the question of insuring a proper inspection of dairies supplying milk to a large population. He (Mr. Buchanan) had all along urged that it was the duty of the Government, and not the municipal authorities, to undertake this matter, and he was glad to see provision made for it in this Bill. He had not had time to see whether it covered the whole ground, but he thought it could be made a very useful part of the measure. In the schedule of diseases were included influenza, mange, rabies, and sheep-pox. The Inspector was obliged to declare all places where disease might be found to be infected places. Supposing, then, an unfortunate dog belonging to a stockowner to be affected with rabies, and the owner shot the dog, his place would be immediately declared an infected place, with all the heavy penalties attaching to such declaration. Rabies was evidently a widely-spread disease; and he would ask, was that provision a proof of the careful supervision on the part of the honourable gentleman of this Bill? Then, they had what seemed to him a totally new provision. Clause 28 provided that any occupier might detain travelling stock, and examine them to see if they had disease. As far as he knew, such a provision as that had never before been passed into law. Clause 37 provided a heavy penalty of £50 for having any carcass within half a mile of a highway; and clause 40 provided a penalty of £200 if any stockowner inoculated any stock. Just fancy such a clause as that attempted to be put in force in Australia, where inoculation was an every-day remedy for pleuro-pneumonia. Surely there was no necessity for such a host of penalties as this Bill contained. Clause 44, for instance, provided a penalty of from £2 to £50 for travelling sheep which had lice or foot-rot. He was utterly at a loss to know what the honourable gentleman could have been thinking of.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that if the honour-

Mr. Buchanan

able gentleman had a pastoral run from the Crown, with the right of other persons to go through it, he would not care for persons who were driving sheep through the run to bring lice to his sheep.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the duty of the Inspector was to find out the existence of the disease or lice, and punish the owner for any damage arising therefrom. He was not aware that any damage had occurred to stockowners throughout the colony which could not be dealt with as he had indicated. He was quite aware that some stockowners required compulsion to make them do their duty, but he was not aware that any such damage had occurred as to justify a provision such as that contained in this Bill. Clause 47 provided that if the Inspector was satisfied that any sheep had foot-rot he might give the owner notice, and so forth. He did hope that the honourable gentleman, when the Bill went before the Stock Committee, would consent at once to have these ridiculous clauses expunged. There were various other points in the Bill which the Stock Committee would no doubt deal with, and therefore he would not detain the House any further with regard to them. There were, for instance, some provisions of a very drastic character dealing with the branding and ear-marking of sheep. For instance, clause 72 said that ear-marking should only be made with a punch or nippers. Then, subsection (b) provided outrageous penalties of from 1s. to 10s. for every sheep. And yet the honourable gentleman told the House that this Bill had received his utmost care and attention. In subsection (3) of the same clause there was a penalty up to £50 in respect of each sheep unlawfully branded: that was, that if any unfortunate settler had the temerity to ignore the patent Government punch or nippers and use his knife to ear-mark his sheep he was liable to this extraordinary penalty, or, at the discretion of the convicting Magistrate, to imprisonment with hard labour for any period not exceeding two years. He would now leave this extraordinary measure to other members to deal with. He was sorry that the honourable gentleman in moving the second reading of the Bill had declared that it had received his best attention, for, in saying that, the honourable gentleman had made a draft upon the credulity of the House which they could not think of honouring.

Mr. WRIGHT said this Bill was certainly a wonderful measure. The honourable member in charge had informed the House that he had received suggestions from agricultural and pastoral associations and others, and had inserted them in the Bill; and the Bill bore strong evidence of that statement. It appeared to him that every suggestion that had been received had been pitchforked into the Bill, and the result was that they had a thoroughly patchwork measure. The various clauses did not agree one with another; and, seeing that the honourable member in charge prided himself upon his practical experience, he could only come to the conclusion that the honourable gentleman had never read the measure: at least if he had done

so he had given it very little consideration. The honourable gentleman proposed to send the Bill to the Stock Committee. It was very necessary that it should go to the Stock Committee, and that Committee would have a very heavy task before them to make the Bill workable and acceptable to the public. The honourable gentleman who had just sat down had referred to a great many clauses which were objectionable, and he did not wish to go over them, but he thought the Bill might fairly be designated "An Act to worry Sheepowners, and legalise Sheep-stealing." The wording of the various clauses was most extraordinary. Clause 23 provided that a person might introduce the virus of any disease with the permission of the Minister. It said, "Every person who wilfully, without the written permission of the Minister, introduces or causes to be introduced into the colony the virus of any disease," *et cetera*, was subject to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years. No doubt what was intended to be understood by that was that, except for legitimate purposes, such as lymph for vaccination, no virus of any disease should be introduced; but the intention was very inadequately set forth in the clause. Clause 25 provided a penalty of £50 upon any person who did not give notice to an Inspector that he merely suspected that one of his sheep had foot-rot. He was not to be cognisant of the fact, but if he merely suspected that a single sheep had the foot-rot, and if he failed within twenty-four hours to give notice to the Inspector, he was liable to a penalty of £50. Clause 37 imposed another penalty of £50 for leaving the carcass of a dead sheep within half a mile of a highway. It did not even specify whether the sheep might be fresh or putrid. It might be that an owner might kill a sheep and hang it up on a tree.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—A diseased carcass.

Mr. WRIGHT said it did not say anything about "a diseased carcass" in that clause. If the fresh body of a sheep were hung up to a tree or in a shed within half a mile of any road, the owner was liable to a penalty of £50. Clause 42 referred to dipping, which was limited to the months of February, March, and April. There was no earthly reason why the period of dipping should be limited to those three months. He might point out to the Minister that a great many stockmasters dipped their sheep at shearing-time, or soon after. The Bill declared that the sheep must be dipped during a certain period. Of course it would be necessary to enlarge the period—say, from the 1st November to the end of March. Clause 44 referred to a "contagious foot-rot," which it, however, did not define. Another clause provided heavy penalties for sheep being driven which had foot-rot, without specifying whether it was contagious or otherwise. The whole Bill had been badly put together, and unless it was very materially modified and improved by the Stock Committee there was not the slightest chance of its passing through the House. Clause 59 provided for branding and appropriating other people's sheep after

shearing. The Bill distinctly provided that the owner was to put his own brand on sheep which did not belong to him.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was quite a common thing to shear sheep and leave them unbranded.

Mr. WRIGHT said, Yes; but practically the provision of the measure in this respect was an instruction to the person shearing the sheep to appropriate them. Then, there were the requirements that the sheep should be fire-branded. The fire-branding of sheep had been tried in various colonies, and had been found to be highly objectionable. He would read what a sheep-farmer had written to him on this Bill. This gentleman was a practical sheep-farmer, and had dealt all his life in sheep. He said,—

"Swyncombe, 19th August, 1893.

"DEAR MR. WRIGHT,—I notice the proposed new Stock Act has a very unworkable and unnecessary clause, viz., compulsory fire-branding sheep. The ordinary brands (wool-marking) are quite sufficient for purposes of identification and registration, and, if any private mark is desired, tattoo under the tail or shoulder can be adopted. There is a bulk too much legislating in this country. Such matters might regulate themselves. Fire-branding was tried in Tasmania in the old days to check sheep-stealing, but utterly failed, and so it will here. I always viewed it as a cruel and unnecessary barbarity. The best check to stealing would be compulsory travelling-pass, given by vendor or Inspector or a Magistrate, to be produced if asked for. At present there is no authority to stop a travelling mob or inspect them, or find where they came from or are going to. To check stealing, make it difficult to move sheep about.—Yours faithfully,

"THOMAS DOWLING.

"E. G. Wright, Esq., M.H.R.

"N.B.—It would be impossible to give a distinctive fire-brand to every owner, as it is with ear-mark, and therefore it could not be a legal mark."

He did not want to occupy the time of the House further in dealing with this matter. The Bill was going to the Stock Committee, and he hoped that when it returned from that Committee it would be in a very different shape from that which it had now.

Captain RUSSELL said his honourable friend the member for Wairapa spoke of this Bill just now as one which was wonderfully made. He was surprised that the honourable gentleman did not say that it was fearfully and wonderfully made. The Bill bristled with penalties, almost from the interpretation clause to the last clause of the Bill. It seemed to him to be a very fearfully made Bill in other respects, which he would deal with as he went on. Much as he respected the knowledge and experience of the honourable member for Wairapa, he did not think he was quite up to his usual mark that night when he spoke disparagingly of the disease of foot-rot. The honourable gentleman said, as he understood, that he would sooner have

scab in his part of the country than foot-rot. Now, he ventured to say that the honourable gentleman was quite wrong, and he thought the honourable member would agree with him when he explained why he was wrong. Scab was a disease peculiar or almost peculiar to poor country, and if a person had scab in his sheep it was only because they were on a profitless tract of country. Some years ago it was his business to speak to a commission agent about a piece of land for the purchase of which he was negotiating. It was after foot-rot had made its appearance in Hawke's Bay; and, amongst other things, he asked the agent if foot-rot existed among the sheep on the property in question. The agent replied, "Good gracious me! I hope so. It is precious poor country if it does not grow foot-rot." So he said it was a very good recommendation when one found that there was foot-rot in the country—it was an indication that the ground was rich; and the Minister, if he thought he could, by drastic legislation, convert such country into poor country, and so extirpate foot-rot, was greatly mistaken. They had much experience of foot-rot even at the present day in Hawke's Bay, and in the old provincial times they had ordinances forbidding people to have foot-rot in their sheep. They had also the compulsory dressing of foot-rot. No sheep were allowed to travel in the district unless the Inspector first came round and certified that they were free from foot-rot. But all these restrictions had no effect: foot-rot travelled from one part of the country to the other—in fact, there was scarcely any place where there was no foot-rot. And although he was speaking now of the state of affairs twenty years ago, and although these preventive measures against foot-rot had been in operation, there was almost as much foot-rot now as there was twenty years ago—excepting, of course, that the flocks now, being crossbred, suffered less than the merino of twenty years ago; and, legislate how they would, twenty years hence there would be foot-rot still. It was absolutely impossible to extirpate it; therefore the fact should be recognised at once, seeing that the practical farmer would be sure to do his best to keep it in check, and for all practical purposes he did keep it in check. To imagine that by any possible means they could extirpate it was tantamount to saying that in the present state of medical knowledge they could prevent the measles from spreading. During this year the measles had spread from one end of New Zealand to the other, although people had done their very best to prevent it. So would it be with foot-rot. He did not intend to go into the Bill clause by clause, because it would go before the Stock Committee, and as there were a number of practical men on that Committee it would go through such an examination there that it might be expected to come back to the House in such a shape as to be workable. But at the same time there were two or three points to which he wished to allude. One was surprised on looking through the Bill to find the enormous powers which it was proposed to

Captain Russell

confer on the Governor in Council, which, of course, was the Minister of the day. The Minister, when introducing the Bill just now, told them it was a consolidating Bill; but it was a consolidating Bill in the sense that it repealed all other Bills. It was a consolidation of the whole power of Parliament in the hands of the Minister himself. There was a line in the interpretation clause which was so fearfully and wonderfully made that one might do away with every other part of the Bill and still have a very complete Bill indeed. They would find these words in the interpretation clause: "This Act includes regulations made hereunder." What did that mean? It meant simply this: that the Minister, or the Governor in Council, or whoever was administering the Act, could make any regulations he thought fit, and these regulations, upon being gazetted, would have the force of law. In other words, these few words rendered all the other parts of the Bill absolutely unnecessary, for the Minister virtually became the Act himself, and he believed he possibly might be a very good Act too. Then he came to the provision with regard to quarantine. Now, what they must all dread in the colony was the importation of disease; and where would that disease come from? If it came from anywhere, the odds were that it would come from England, or, at any rate, from across the seas from some district which was declared an infected district; and yet this Bill proposed to establish a quarantine-station wherever the Minister chose. Now, when the Bill was sent to the Agricultural Society of Hawke's Bay they held meetings, at which they gave very careful and protracted consideration to the measure, and one of the recommendations they made was that there should be only one quarantining place for the whole of New Zealand, and that quarantine-station he believed it was recommended should be *Somes Island*, in *Wellington Harbour*. He was not sure that they recommended that place, but he was under the impression that they did. He might be told that by having only one quarantine-ground in New Zealand they would place considerable difficulties in the way of importers of stock; but this was not the case, for, if they had a place like *Somes Island* in the midst of a harbour so centrally situated as *Wellington*, it was perfectly easy to ship stock away again to any other part of the colony if they were to be transported by steamer. It was so important that they should not have disease introduced from across the seas that to have one quarantine-station, which would be directly under the eye of the person administering the department, seemed to him to be a provision which was essential, if they were anxious to prevent the spread of disease in the colony. Then, the driving of sheep had been alluded to by various speakers. He lived in a district where the sheep were almost entirely long-wool, and knowing, as he did, himself, the practical working of these sheep, he had no hesitation in saying that to restrict the driving of these long-woolled sheep to hours during which the

sun was shining brightly and the temperature was such as the people of the southern portion of the colony could not understand, was practically to debar residents in his part of the country from driving sheep at all. The sheep on most of their runs were mustered—and the same would apply to the driving of sheep in the Hawke's Bay Provincial District—in such a manner as this: The men quitted their beds at two or three o'clock in the morning and got the whole of the mustering done by eight o'clock. After eight o'clock in the summer months the only thing for the men to do was to lie down and keep easy until the sun got down; and yet this Bill proposed to prevent people from doing this work at those hours when the men would be best able to do it.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it could be done any time during daylight.

Captain RUSSELL said it was not so. He hoped that he was wrong, but, at any rate, his impression after reading the Bill was that they were restricted to certain hours. However, they were not allowed to drive sheep during the night, and yet they might have a very good opportunity of driving on a moonlight night. As to sheep-stealing, he knew that practice was not common in his district, and he might also say that the owners by combining together could adopt such means that if the crime existed it could be discovered and brought to light. He had already alluded to the provisions as to dressing for foot-rot, and in fact this portion of the Bill had been referred to by so many speakers that he would say nothing more about it. With regard to wool-branding, there was the strongest feeling against this in Hawke's Bay, so strong that in view of the damage entailed on the whole district they got up a petition to the Governor asking that they should be exempted from the branding of sheep: and he thought, if the Minister would consider the position in which the brand was placed on the long-woolled sheep when they were shorn, and would look at them again after they had been a few months shorn, he would find the position of the part branded had been exactly reversed,—that the wool hung down in such a manner that the brand which was put on after shearing was perfectly illegible, for the wool hung down several inches in length, so that the brand ceased to be a brand at all: at any rate, it was impossible to distinguish what it was. Then, again, there was a strong objection to making the age-mark on sheep by the fire-brand. The view of the Agricultural Society of Hawke's Bay was that one side on one ear should be particularly reserved for this purpose; that with the three sides of the two ears the Minister of Agriculture should be at liberty to play what tricks he pleased, as they would afford ample room for putting on brands of various kinds, but that the one side of one ear should be restricted to the putting-on of the age-mark, which should be universal throughout the colony, so that any one looking over a rail should see at a glance on a sheep an age-mark similar to that which was on every sheep of

like age in every yard throughout the colony. As he had already pointed out, the Bill said, "This Act includes all regulations made hereunder." There might be some very wonderful regulations "made hereunder." Judging by the Noxious Weeds Bill, they might make regulations compelling sheep to eat Yorkshire-fog or goose-grass. That would be a very serious restriction on the liberty of the sheep. The 72nd clause of the Bill was one that he felt sure that no Committee would pass. It virtually enabled the department to make all regulations about branding, and whether or not they might be right he would not argue at that moment. His own impression was that it would not be right. As to using only punches or nippers, people, of course, might get accustomed to them, but it required to be done only after careful deliberation, and not merely by order of the Governor in Council, which would virtually be placing themselves under the control of the Minister of the day. With regard to the question of diseases, which were to be defined by the Governor, the clause was too wide, and he could not see any reason for giving such powers. As the Bill, however, was going to the Stock Committee, and then had to come back, he would say no more than this: that when it did come back he would be prepared to assist the Government in getting the Bill made as good a one as possible.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said, as he had the honour to represent a very important constituency, which embodied a large number of agriculturists and stock-raisers, he had procured a copy of the Bill as soon as he could, and had forwarded it to those of his constituents who understood such matters. He had asked the Taranaki Agricultural Society to go through the Bill clause by clause, and to send him any suggestions they had to make. The following was their communication in return:—

"New Plymouth, 14th August, 1893.

"SIR,—I have the honour, by direction, to forward for your information copy, as under-noted, of a resolution passed at a committee-meeting of the Taranaki Agricultural Society held on the 12th instant, namely,—

"That the secretary write Mr. Smith, acknowledging receipt of new Stock Bill, with thanks, and state that this Committee find the new Stock Bill, as introduced by the Hon. Mr. McKenzie, is similar to the Bill as issued in 1892. The only difference between the two is that in the new Bill the tax on cattle is omitted, but that the principle of very heavy penalties in many cases for very slight offences has not been changed; and that this Committee therefore ask Mr. Smith to refer to our report of May last, and request him to endeavour to get the Bill withdrawn.—I have, &c.,

"C. T. MILLS, Secretary."

"Copy of Report of Taranaki Agricultural Society on the Stock Bill of 1892, dated May, 1893.

"The first thing in the Bill that strikes attention is, that the penalties inflicted upon

owners of stock are most extreme. The penalties range up to as high fines as £500, in addition to imprisonment with or without hard labour for a period of two years. By an Order in Council new provisions may be introduced in addition to those in the Bill, and for these at present unknown crimes very heavy penalties may be inflicted.

"Clauses 5 and 6, which relate to these Orders in Council, prescribe that 'for each and every offence' the offending person may be fined up to £500. Surely this gives to irresponsible and, probably, ignorant men—that is, ignorant of the wants and cares of the agricultural community—a frightful amount of power for mischief.

"It is not needful to enumerate all the penalties named in the Act. They are all pitched in the same high key, and would, if exacted, mean ruin to the victims. Almost every clause of the Bill is a heavy penal clause. Now, it has been, for more than two generations past, recognised that penalties that shock the general feeling of the community are not carried out, and it will probably be so in this case. Men will not be parties to the ruin of their neighbours on account of an inadvertence or a mistake, or even of a negligence.

"Clause 22 is peculiarly harsh and unjust. It refers to stock, &c., illegally introduced into the colony, and provides that such stock may, at any time within three years after its introduction, be seized, and that the person so importing may be punished as if he had committed a breach of the Customs Act. Not only is the original importer to be punished, but the owner also at the time of the seizure.

"No compensation 'shall be paid to the owner of any stock which may be destroyed under the provisions of this section.' This clause ought to be eliminated.

"Clause 25: 'When the Minister is satisfied that stock is or has been, within the preceding ninety days, diseased, he may order the owner to destroy the stock.' There is no compensation. Surely there ought to be compensation where there is no fault on the owner's part, and the slaughter is for the good of the general public. Then, again, why is the Minister thus specially brought in? This is a matter for Inspectors and Cattle Boards.

"Clause 27 is very remarkable. Every owner that has diseased stock must give notice to the Inspector within twenty-four hours. This might be difficult sometimes, or might be innocently overlooked, or might even be impossible. But the penalty, all the same, is sure—not less than £5 and not more than £50 for every day of neglect. This, however, is comparatively light. If the owner has suspected such stock to be diseased (and that suspicion can only be got at by his own evidence) he is liable. Surely it is a perversion of justice thus to try to penetrate into a man's mind. The law has no right to go beyond established and palpable facts.

"Part III. relates to rates levied upon sheep and cattle. At present sheep only are rated, and this rating has been a continuous source

of annoyance and protest on the part of owners. The proposed rate on cattle will not be less burdensome or unsatisfactory. If there is to be a rate there should be no exemptions.

"Clause 54 will be found to be unworkable. The cost of branding all sheep or cattle going more than one mile from the owner's land would be considerable; but it has further to be considered that at the market or sale to which they are sent they are likely to change hands and would require to be rebranded. In the course of a week the poll of the sheep and the rump of the cow would be an undistinguishable mass of far-brands.

"Clause 83 makes penalties recoverable before a Resident Magistrate or two Justices in a summary way. In ordinary cases the Resident Magistrate may be left to decide, but where the money-penalties incurred might be over £50 the case should be heard in the District Court; and if the accused be liable, on condition, to be imprisoned the trial ought to be by jury if the accused desire it. The same clause (83) enacts that information under this Act 'may be laid at any time within three years next after the offence is committed or the penalty incurred.' In three years the defendant might be at a great disadvantage in conducting his defence. Witnesses may be dead or absent, the whole circumstances of the matter be but indistinctly remembered. The term should be reduced to three months.

"Clause 87 is another most unreasonable one. Why should the onus of disproof lie with the defendant? This is to reverse the whole principle of British law, and would make trial a farce. Surely it is only fair that the accuser should be left to make out his case. If he cannot make good his accusations let him be silent.

"The Committee recommends a withdrawal of this Bill. It is so faulty in its whole construction that it would be impossible to make it into a useful measure. Inspectors of Stock ought to be appointed rather with a view to help the owners than to catch them in a net and punish them. These Inspectors ought to have power to order the destruction of cattle in certain cases, whether appearing in open market or on the farm; but, in cases where the cattle are proved not to have been suffering from the disease anticipated, full compensation should be made to the owner. Again, where the disease has not been brought on by any brutality or neglect of the owner or his servants, compensation should be given to a reasonable extent, to be fixed by Act. The Committee believes that this would lead to a far greater vigilance than any system of oppressive fines and imprisonments.

"Regarding the quarantine of cattle from ports outside of the colony, the Committee recommends that the legal detention should include the time spent on the sea-voyage, unless the animals exhibit signs of infectious or contagious disease. Once cattle are freed from quarantine detention there should not be any question afterwards as to the penalties up to that date.

Mr. E. M. Smith

"It is recommended that the provisions of clause 44 regarding annual dipping of sheep should be altered to read from the 1st February to the 30th April. In this district the sheep fairs begin in February, and no sheep should appear there without having been dipped."

He had read this in order to let the Minister know what was the opinion of the people in his district on the Bill. He was very glad the Minister said it was going to the Stock Committee; and when it was brought back, if it was agreeable to those of his constituents interested in the measure, he would be found supporting it. He would be glad to do so, because he was sure it was far from the Minister's intentions to bring in any Bill that would be oppressive to agriculturists, or to any person in the colony. As the Stock Committee was composed of practical agriculturists, they would do justice to the Bill in the interest of the farmer and stock-raiser. He would await the return of the Bill from that Committee, and see its condition before acting in this matter. But he was not going to say a Stock Bill was not required, for he knew there were many reasons for passing a Stock Bill; also that many of the penal clauses were already in the Branding Act, the Sheep Act, or the Cattle Act, so there was no reason for altering those clauses. The penal clauses would only be enforced in glaring cases, where it was found that the health of the public was in danger or was damaged; so there was no need of so great alarm.

Mr. RICHARDSON said, as the Bill would come from the Stock Committee very much altered, if it came back at all, he would not go into its details. He would only refer to what had been said by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay with regard to scab. He entirely differed from that honourable gentleman in saying that scab was the product of a poor country. He could remember when it extended from one end of the colony to the other.

Captain RUSSELL said he did not intend his honourable friend to understand that scab was only the product of a poor country, but that in rich country one would soon get rid of it.

Mr. RICHARDSON said an extraordinary feature of the Bill was that everything was overridden by regulations, and that, whereas under any previous statute which he had seen a regulation made under an Act was *ultra vires* if it exceeded the scope of the Act, by the interpretation clause in this Bill the regulations became part of the Act. If honourable members would turn to page 5 they would find,—

"The Governor may from time to time, by Order in Council, make, alter, or revoke such regulations as he may deem necessary for all or any of the following purposes:—

"(a.) For dividing the colony into districts for the purposes of this Act, and parting any district into subdivisions, and assigning names thereto respectively:

"(b.) For determining in which district or subdivision any land intersected by any district or subdivision shall be included:

"(c.) For regulating the duties of Inspectors of Stock, Registrars of Brands, and all other officers generally, or in particular circumstances, as the case may be, and for the management of offices:

"(d.) For imposing fees and charges for anything authorised by this Act, and for prescribing by and to whom and when such fees and charges shall be paid:

"(e.) And generally for such purposes as he may deem necessary or expedient for carrying out the objects and purposes of this Act in all matters of detail whatsoever."

Then, going on to clause 8, they would find the length that might be gone to by regulations:—

"In and by any regulations made under this Act the Governor in Council may prescribe the maximum and minimum penalties for the breach thereof in such manner that the maximum penalty for any offence shall not exceed in any case the sum of five hundred pounds."

The whole power was thus given absolutely to the Minister of the day.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was the law now.

Mr. RICHARDSON said it was not so now. It would save the Stock Committee much trouble, and give the House an opportunity of knowing what they were dealing with, if they altered the Bill in this direction:—

"The title of this Act is 'The McKenzie Stock Act, 1893.'

"Whereas we have an all-wise Minister of Lands and an infallible Chief Inspector of Stock:

"Be it therefore enacted,—

"1. There shall be one law relating to stock within the Colony of New Zealand, that is to say, the will of the present Minister of Lands, as on the platform expressed: Provided that no penalty may be imposed hereunder exceeding five hundred pounds, or imprisonment for any period exceeding two years.

"2. All previous Acts are hereby repealed.

"3. This Act shall remain in force while the said Minister remains in office, and no longer."

Mr. McGUIRE said the Bill was drawn somewhat on the lines of last year's Bill. It gave very little satisfaction to farmers living in the North Island. It seemed to him to be full of all kinds of penalties and pitfalls to trip up the unfortunate farmers. By Order in Council provisions of a most dangerous character could be made, simply at *ipse dixit* of the Minister. Such severe penalties should not be inflicted, and certainly should not exist in a measure of this description.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It is the law at the present time.

Mr. McGUIRE said, unfortunately for them it was the law, but he thought all these unnecessary penalties should be done away with.

Now, there was a sheep-tax, and, seeing that scab had been eradicated, it was unnecessary to continue that tax: if continued, it would look very like class legislation. As it was originally imposed for the purpose of defraying the expense of eradicating scab, he thought it unjust at the present time to continue such a tax, and he would like to see it struck out of the Bill. In his opinion the Bill was quite unnecessary, and was not asked for by the farmers. In fact, the agricultural societies all over the North had condemned the Bill. There were many very dangerous provisions in the Bill. Then, again, the Bill provided for the destruction of cattle without compensation to the owner of the cattle destroyed. There were many dangerous provisions in the Bill, and, personally, he would like to move that it be read a second time that day six months. But, he presumed, that would not be a proper course to take at this stage. He knew there were men on the Stock Committee, who understood the matter thoroughly, and he understood the Bill would be relegated to that Committee, for them to say in what shape it should come before the Committee of the House. Under these circumstances, he would not take up the time of the House further.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE said he had received a great many communications from his constituents in connection with this Bill. The chief objection seemed to centre round the question of ear-marking. Of course that matter would be thoroughly threshed out in Committee. Clause 72 he took very great exception to. It dealt with the matter of branding. It had been pointed out to him by farmers that, if they had a quantity of sheep to get through a swing-gate, it would be almost impossible to comply with the clause, as they could not reasonably afford the time necessary to do the work. In the matter of fining, and ear-marking, and punching there was also exception taken. He was aware that it left room for the obliteration of marks, which had not been provided against under the new arrangement proposed by the Minister. He thought the Bill provided for too severe penalties. Those penalties ought to be reduced. He thought the time had come when people should not be alarmed or punished into observing the laws of the country. As the matter was going before the Stock Committee he would have an opportunity there of going through the Bill. He would therefore not delay the House further.

Mr. PALMER considered that the Bill was of such a stringent nature that it would be hurtful to the farmers, and he had received communications from many of his constituents, and on that account he was compelled to stand up and oppose the Bill. The honourable member for Clutha had stated certain objections that had come to him from his constituents, relating particularly to ear-marking. The objections which he (Mr. Palmer) had received were to the Bill as a whole. The Bill had been brought in by the Minister of Lands on the same lines last year, and it was discussed then, but did not become law; and he

regretted to see it brought in again this year. He objected especially to the cattle-tax, and he hoped it would be struck out. In fact, he hoped the Bill itself would not be allowed to see the light of day. It had been circulated freely throughout his district, and when the people had become thoroughly conversant with it they had come to the conclusion that it could be quite as well done without. There was no urgency about the Bill, and stock-owners did not want it. He did not think the unfortunate farmers should be persecuted any more. If this Stock Bill, the Noxious Weeds Bill, and the Codlin-moth Bill, which subjected the farmers to all kinds of penalties, were passed, then well might the farmers pray that the present members might never be returned, for, if they were, the farmer, if he could not get out of New Zealand in a month's time, always had only the one course open to him, which was to commit suicide. The only clause, not a consolidating clause, which was of any use was the short title. He did not like the Bill at all, and was not going to discuss it clause by clause. He would take the clause, however, with regard to the power of the Governor to make regulations. Now, they did not know what regulations were to be made. If the regulations were in conformity with the Act they would be most severe. First there was a penalty of £5; then further on they came to a penalty of £50; then £500; further on again they found that a man could get two years' imprisonment; and under clause 38 he might get two years' imprisonment and a fine of £200. This was the most extraordinary amount of penalty he had ever heard of for so small a matter. Now, there were other clauses relating to the driving of sheep, and, if he understood correctly the remarks made by the Minister, these driving clauses were introduced for the purpose of preventing sheep-stealing. It seemed to him to be a very severe remedy. It was like cutting off a man's head to cure the toothache. If such legislation as this were passed, a number of drivers in his part of the country would be thrown out of employment. He had had objections from all parts of his district, and he hoped he had done his duty by expressing his disapproval of the Bill on behalf of his constituents.

Mr. MEREDITH was of opinion that the Bill was an improvement on the measure of the same name introduced last session. He thought, however, it required much more improvement before it was likely to meet with acceptance at the hands of those in whose interests it was introduced. He had no doubt that when it came before the Stock Committee, composed of honourable members practically acquainted with the matters dealt with by the Bill, the result would be that it would come back to the House in a workable form. It was as a Canterbury farmer that he looked at the Bill. He noticed that clause 42 dealt with the dipping of sheep with a view to killing parasites common on sheep. That clause would have to read, not "from February to April," but "from

the first day of November to the thirty-first day of May following." In Canterbury sheep were dipped all through the month of May, and also immediately after the shearing, so that it was none too early to allow sheep to be dipped from the 1st November. It was not an unusual thing among flockowners to dip sheep twice in one year, with a view to the complete destruction of parasites. Clause 45 proposed to deal with foot-rot. That was very common in the South Island on certain lands, particularly among merino sheep. Small farmers were in the habit of purchasing, during the autumn, merino wethers to fatten, and if there were excessive rains during winter and spring it was next to impossible to keep them free from foot-rot. Farmers were very anxious to prevent it, as when once foot-rot entered a flock it meant a loss to the owner. He was of opinion that the provision contained in the Bill dealing with sheep bad with foot-rot exposed for sale at public saleyards was a good one. Clause 51 referred to the mustering, shearing, cutting, tailing, and branding of sheep. It compelled an owner to give notice to a neighbour when mustering his sheep, which he considered a useful provision, as sheep-stealing was prevalent in some parts of the country. The sheep of one neighbour got mixed with the sheep of another, and, if not examined by the owner, a dishonest man might put his own brand on the sheep and claim them. Clause 53 dealt with the driving of sheep. He had heard frequent complaints from people living by the Great North Road, Canterbury. When sheep were being driven from the Culverden sale, persons driving sheep were in the habit of allowing them to remain on a portion of a road well grassed, and not driving them perhaps half a mile during a day. That had been a considerable annoyance to persons having land fronting a main road: their fences had got broken down through the sheep being so slowly driven along the road. Sheep-stealing had been somewhat prevalent in certain parts of the country, and he thought the provision for driving sheep from six o'clock in the morning until six o'clock at night would do a great deal to minimise the evil of sheep-stealing. No doubt in the North Island, as had been described by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, the climatic influences were such as to render it inconvenient to carry out this clause; but he thought provision could be made to provide for the North Island under exceptional climatic circumstances. Clause 72 dealt with ear-marking, and he thought it was a very useful provision—namely, that a punch or nippers should be used in ear-marking. The knife had been too frequently used, and the consequence had been that ear-marks had been easily defaced; but if ear-marks were made by nippers or punches it would not be easy to deface them. He did not think that fire-branding was at all necessary; it should not be compulsory, or even optional. The fines contained in the Bill were excessive in number and amount, and would only have an irritating effect.

Sir J. HALL said, as the Bill was a consolidating measure, he would not trouble the House with many remarks, especially as it was going to a Select Committee. It appeared to him that, as a question of policy, it was not wise to embody the law relating to cattle in one Act with that relating to sheep. It would have been better, in his opinion, to have adhered to the plan of dealing with cattle in one Act and sheep in another. One other remark he wished to make was, that he thought it would be better not to give such very large and exceptional powers of making laws by regulation as the Bill afforded. Such excessive power ought not to be given to anybody, and he did not think that regulations should, in the manner proposed in the Bill, be equal to Acts of Parliament. He could not, however, agree with many of the honourable gentlemen who had spoken on his side of the House in their general complaint as to the excessive stringency of the Act. He thought those honourable gentlemen had been rather hasty. He had had a great deal of experience about the present law; he had introduced the first Act in New Zealand relating to disease in sheep, and had been engaged in the administration of it for many years. Scab was the scourge in Canterbury in the early days, and the settlers had to work very hard to get rid of it. If many gentlemen in the North Island who had spoken had lived there, and had seen the efforts which were necessary to eradicate that disease, they would have been rather less inclined to condemn the stringent provisions of this Bill.

Mr. BUCHANAN said that they had gone through those troubles in the North Island.

Sir J. HALL said, not to the extent they had in Canterbury; if so, his honourable friend would recognise the necessity for stringency in the law. Experience appeared to have been thrown away on his honourable friend, and he required to be saved from himself. It was, however, perfectly true, as the Minister had stated, that two-thirds of the provisions which the honourable gentleman had objected to were law at the present time. Yet, however desirable it might be to consolidate the law, if the Minister found he could not carry through this session a measure embodying provisions sufficiently stringent, he (Sir J. Hall) would like to see him abandon the attempt to pass this Bill, and leave the Act as it stood. The danger of having an inefficient law was enormous, and might be disastrous, if disease should be introduced and spread through the colony. The present law was, he thought, an efficient law, and they had had experience in working it; and, if they could not substitute an Act equally efficient, he thought it would be better to leave the law as it was at present.

Mr. TANNER would like to offer a few words upon the Bill. It appeared to him to be a Bill of a most comprehensive character, and a Bill the importance of which could not very well be exaggerated. It dealt with stock in so many ways, with regard to custody, diseases, removal,

branding, and ownership, and it so seriously affected the pastoral and dairying industries, which overshadowed the other industries in the colony, that it appeared to him to deserve the closest consideration that it was possible to bring to bear upon it. It was on that account he was very glad to find the Bill would have to pass the ordeal of the Stock Committee. The object of the Bill was, no doubt, a most laudable one, and the only question that occurred to his mind was, whether too much was not being attempted by the Bill. It appeared to him that some of the regulations it contained were of a very drastic character. He did not propose to enter into the details of the various provisions of the Bill, especially as it was a consolidating measure; but in all probability by the time it reappeared in the House after passing the Stock Committee it would bear a different complexion. As there were a number of gentlemen in the House on that Committee who might be considered experts in the manifold branches of the subject, he was very glad to find it must pass them before coming again on the floor of the House.

Mr. BUCKLAND would like to say a word or two on the second reading. He did not object to a Bill consolidating the present law; but some of the clauses in the Bill now before them he strongly objected to. The question of incipient foot-rot in sheep had been referred to by one honourable gentleman, which was different from the foot-rot mentioned in the Bill; and he thought that provision would have to come out. A man might without being aware of it get a sheep suffering from incipient foot-rot. That form of foot-rot was a very peculiar thing, and would break out in a flock accustomed to run in long grasses, and it was a very difficult thing to tackle. He had had very large experience in this question of foot-rot, and he had found that the people who did not keep their sheep clean suffered very largely. In regard to dipping, he thought it should be compulsory to dip once a year; but he objected to February, March, and April being the months. In the North people suffered from want of water during those months, which was the driest time of the year, and they preferred to dip earlier. If a person dipped in November, he (Mr. Buckland) did not think that he should be compelled to dip during those three months. But he would support the compulsory dipping of all sheep. Another matter was with regard to ticks. It was wrong that because one tick was found on a sheep that was being driven to market the sheepowner should be fined. He thought that ticks ought to be exempted altogether, but he thoroughly concurred in lice being included. With regard to the "driving" clause, he considered that it would not work in the North, and he would suggest to the Minister that these driving clauses should only be brought into operation on the petition of a certain proportion of the sheepowners in a district, and then only by Order in Council. Under that arrangement the Canterbury people, if they liked, could have the clause applied, but the Waikato district

could be left out. As regarded sheep-stealing, he thought that the more safeguards there were against sheep-stealing the more likely it was to go on. They would not stop it by making people drive in the day-time. In the Auckland District sheep would not travel in the middle of a hot day, and they had to be removed at the end of the day. The question was an awkward one, and he hoped the Minister would to some extent modify that clause, so that it might be brought into operation on the petition of the sheepowners of the district affected. Then, with reference to the question of ear-marking, the Minister seemed to think if he could only get the clip brought into use it would stop sheep-stealing altogether; but there was no reason why, if a clip could be put in, it could not be taken out and a new clip put in, the old clip being destroyed. He thought, under the system proposed, it was encouraging sheep-stealing: he would say that they were actually increasing risk from sheep-stealing. There was no certainty about ear-marks, and if farmers were merely to rely upon ear-marks they would lose a lot of their sheep, for, no matter how trustworthy men might be, they constantly made mistakes in ear-marking, and sheep would have to be let go. It was not a satisfactory way of dealing with the question. The only satisfactory way was to be continually rebranding or fire-branding. Then, again, they were going to interfere with private fire-branding. Many people fire-branded their sheep, and, if they were not to be allowed to mark them in that way any longer, that would be disarranging the arrangements of people in regard to fire-branding. Another thing in the Bill he objected to was the branding of horses. They talked about cruelty in branding sheep, but it would be infinitely more cruel to brand horses; and he certainly objected to the compulsory branding of horses.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is optional.

Mr. BUCKLAND said it was not optional in the Act.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes, it is.

Mr. BUCKLAND said it was only optional when a horse was in a fenced paddock, but directly it was taken from the paddock it must be branded. They could keep a horse in a paddock to look at him, but directly they took it on the road they would have to brand it. Then, he saw that deer were included in the Bill. He did not know whether the honourable gentleman proposed to catch deer, but he (Mr. Buckland) knew from experience of deer-stalking that it was exceptionally difficult to bring down deer with a bullet, and it would be much more difficult to brand them; and he did not see any necessity for including them. He hoped the Stock Committee would take the Bill into their earnest consideration. If they could do nothing with it at all in the way he suggested, he hoped the House would not see it again; but if they could make it a decent Bill, by removing the objections he had urged to it, then he would be prepared to support it, because it would be a good thing to have the laws relating to stock consolidated.

Mr. Tanner

He would defer any further remarks on the Bill till he saw in what state it came from the Stock Committee.

Sir R. STOUT said one hesitated to deal with a subject of that character, which was so technical, and only fit for experts; but he had had brought before him a great number of cases in which charges of sheep-stealing had been made, and, in his opinion, the whole system of branding and ear-marking sheep was quite futile to stop sheep-stealing. He had a suggestion to make which, he believed, if carried out would, if it did not entirely prevent, at any rate, minimise the evil—that was, that there should be district registers for sheep provided for. Let them suppose they had a district, and a register for that district. In that district register there would be the names of owners of sheep, the numbers of the sheep, and the brands. Whenever any owner sold any sheep he would have to at once send to the Registrar particulars of the sheep disposed of; and, likewise, any person buying any sheep would have to send particulars of the sheep he had bought, and the name of the person from whom he had bought them; and so they would have a double check; and any failure to do that should be punished as an offence. If they had a system of registry like that they would reduce sheep-stealing to a very small minimum. They could also provide that, as well as owners, auctioneers should be bound to send notice to the registry of sales effected in their yards, and in that way they would have a check upon all sheep sold and purchased, and so the registry would be rendered complete. There would be no trouble, either, about collecting the sheep-tax. The great trouble was, where sheep were sold, that one owner might have a dozen, twenty, or a hundred marks amongst the flock, and especially when a man bought sheep for the purpose of fattening them up and sending them to be frozen. The practice of ear-marking and even of fire-branding sheep was not sufficient to prevent stealing. He had seen a case where half a dozen experts were called in to say what were the peculiar marks on certain sheep, and none of them could agree. The head of the sheep had to be shorn, and then it was found that most of the experts were wrong. Unless they adopted some system of registration, mere ear-marking or fire-branding would not prevent stealing. If they had a proper system of registration they could have it carried out in such a way as would entirely put down what had happened in many districts—a great deal of sheep-stealing, with which the police seemed utterly unable to cope. The suggestion he had made would not entail much expense, and he believed it was the only efficient way of dealing with the matter.

Mr. BUICK would have liked to speak on the measure that night, because it was a very important Bill, and one that would materially affect the interests of a large number of his constituents. Still, as the measure was going to the Stock Committee, where it would receive most careful consideration, he would, for

various reasons, defer his remarks till it came back from that Committee.

Mr. LAKE said, as the Bill was going to the Stock Committee, he did not propose to discuss it at that stage; but he would like to point out to the Minister that a great number of the provisions of the Bill were condemned by the people in his district as wholly incompatible with the conduct of their business. The driving clauses were unanimously objected to from one end of the country to the other. In his district, which was a district of small settlement, where the saleyards were close together, it would be almost impossible—apart from ordinary reasons, such as hot weather, when the sheep could not be driven at all during the day—to comply with the provisions. Then, take the case of farms about three or four miles from saleyards. A farmer goes there and finds, perhaps, that a certain class of cattle is wanted, and when he immediately goes to procure that class for the sale, to meet the demand, he is met with the provision that before he moves them he must send notice to his neighbour, and so forth. The Bill of last year had a provision that sheep must be tar-branded before being removed. This Bill had been brought forward in so many different shapes that confusion existed as to its provisions. For instance, when it was sent round by the Minister to the various agricultural societies it contained a little piece of exceptional legislation in a small experiment in the way of the graduated tax, and he was glad to see that that had disappeared from the Bill since it had been submitted to these societies. He thought, if they were to have any of these provisions in the North Island, they should only be brought in by Order in Council upon petition. It should be provided, especially in a small-settlement district, where everybody knew his stock, and where it would be absolutely impossible to carry out the provisions relating to mustering and driving cattle, that certain provisions of the Bill should be given effect to only upon petition from the settlers.

Mr. RHODES said this Bill had been carefully gone through by the agricultural societies down South, and several amendments had been suggested, which would, no doubt, be put before the Stock Committee. He would not go generally into the Bill, because he would have the chance of going through it at a subsequent stage; but if the Minister could devise any means, either by this Bill or any other Bill, which would prevent sheep-stealing, he would do as good a work as any work he had done since he had been in office. Sheep-stealing had increased so much of late that it was absolutely necessary that the Government should take steps by which it could be prevented.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was sorry this Bill had not met with a better reception at the hands of honourable members than it had received that evening. He thought, with the exception of the honourable member for Ellesmere, almost every speaker had condemned it. He feared there was very little chance of the Bill passing. However, it was his bounden duty to

give an opportunity to the House to express an opinion on the subject. He had been requested by people throughout the colony to deal with this subject, and one of the reasons which were most particularly mentioned to him in the communications he had had, both orally and in writing, from people throughout the colony was that they had such a confusion of laws in connection with stock at the present time that if they wished to see the law on the subject they had to get no fewer than four separate Acts; and a consolidation of these measures was very necessary to enable ordinary people to know what the law was on the subject. If the discussion which had taken place that night had no other effect it had served to indicate that probably not one out of twenty people in the colony could say what the law was on this subject, and he might go further and say that a large number of members of the House did not know the law on the subject at the present time, for more than two-thirds of the objections made were to what was the law already and on our statute-book. Those great penalties they had heard of that night, and this immense power to make regulations by Order in Council, they had got on the statute-book at the present time. He took the precaution to send the Bill to the various agricultural and pastoral societies throughout the colony, and the replies were most amusing—in fact, he did not think any one could sit down to a more amusing piece of work than the reading of four or five replies from four or five different societies. Each one had its own version of the subject, and each differed with regard to almost every part of the Bill; and if any man, however able he might be, who was clever enough to put the views of the various societies in form, and bring down to that House an Act that would give anything like satisfaction to those societies would be a very smart man indeed. However, he had done the best he could in bringing the measure before the House. With regard to sheep-stealing, and the suggestion made by the honourable member for Inangahua, they had now a registry, and every one who had sheep was bound to register the number of sheep he owned; and the only difference was that when sheep were sold or bought no notice was required to be given to the Registrar. Everything else the honourable gentleman had referred to was law at the present time. Had he put a clause in the Bill to force every man who bought and every man who sold twenty ewes, or twenty lambs, or twenty wethers to go and register them, honourable members would have raised objections to it as they did to other clauses in the Bill. His own opinion was—and any one who knew anything about the subject would bear him out in saying—that the only way to put down sheep-stealing was, first of all, to prevent the use of the knife. As long as they allowed a person to cut and carve the ears of sheep, so long would they have sheep-stealing, and the only way to prevent it was to insist on the use of the punch or nippers. Of course it would be difficult to get people to take to this

at first; but we were daily improving, and beginning to see the errors of the past, and by degrees people would understand the advantage of these provisions. There were some persons who did not see any use in a Sheep or Cattle Act at all, and who thought that persons might be allowed to take their infected sheep into their neighbour's sheepyard and infect his sheep,—who, in fact, thought that these things ought to be allowed to regulate themselves. Well, all he could say was, that if they had not had the law in force which was introduced by his honourable friend opposite the colony would never have got rid of scab, and he was sure that honourable gentleman would admit that this measure was necessary. If, to-morrow, the rinderpest, or foot-and-mouth disease, or any similar disease were to be introduced into the colony, they ought to have some power to cope with it; and the other colonies would be calling out for most stringent regulations with regard to any such disease. They were now dealing with the subject when there were no such diseases in the colony, and, he hoped, not likely to come here, and therefore there was no panic; and he thought that was the time when they ought to deal with the subject, so that they might be in a position to meet any emergency that might arise. They were not proposing to provide simply for diseases which at present existed in the colony, but for other diseases which they hoped would not come but which might come here at any moment; and they wanted to be in a position, if such diseases should break out, to put a stop to them at once. It was for this reason that he thought it was necessary to have large powers placed in the hands of the Governor in Council, to make necessary regulations in case of emergency. Surely honourable members would be ready to leave in the hands of the Government, who were responsible to the House and to the country for their actions, the power of making such regulations as were necessary. Surely it was safe to leave very large powers in that way in the hands of the Government, especially when they were dealing with a subject in connection with which they did not know what emergencies might arise. With regard to quarantine-stations, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay said that there should be only one quarantine-station for the colony. In regard to that, he might say he had already reduced the number to one for the South Island and one for the North Island, whereas there used to be one in Auckland, another in Dunedin, and another in Southland. His action since he had been a Minister had been to reduce the number as much as possible, and he had spent some amount of money on Somes Island, in Wellington, in making it a proper quarantine-station. And what had been the result? That he had at once had the greatest objection raised because he had taken the quarantine-station from Dunedin and the other from Auckland. He admitted that there ought only to be one; but he would ask the honourable gentleman, if he were in his place, would he be prepared to say that there should

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be only one? He had gone so far as to say that he would carry quarantined stock from Lyttelton to Southland free to the owners, for he found that would be cheaper than keeping up a quarantine-station there, because it must be remembered that keeping up the proper accommodation at a quarantine-station involved considerable expense. Now, as he had said before, many of the objections which had been raised against the Bill that evening were objections to provisions which existed in the law at present. If honourable members did not want the four laws consolidated let them say so, and the Bill could be dropped. He had no special regard for it, and had only thought that it would be well to consolidate the law on the subject. He was ready, after the Bill was read a second time, to send it to the Stock Committee, which was composed of practical men; and in that way he thought they would be able to pass a good measure, when there was no panic or urgent hurry for it. The honourable member for Wairarapa, of course, raised his stock arguments against the Bill. He had heard the honourable gentleman use the same arguments time after time in the House, and the honourable gentleman never could see anything beyond the District of Wairarapa. So far as stock was concerned, the whole driving of stock in the Colony of New Zealand was, according to the honourable gentleman, to be regulated to suit the Wairarapa. The time of the year at which sheep were to be shorn was to be fixed so as to suit the Wairarapa; and, in fact, everything that was to be done must suit the Wairarapa. Of course, the honourable gentleman represented that district, and he could not find any fault with him for holding those views, but the honourable gentleman must remember that there were other people in the colony who knew something about these matters as well as himself and the people of the Wairarapa. One objection raised to the Bill was with regard to the provision as to driving sheep in the day. Now, in the South the cry from almost every one had been, "Put a stop to driving sheep at night—in the dark." In fact, it was absolutely necessary to do that if they were to put a stop to sheep-stealing in the South. Of course, the Bill did not go so far as the honourable gentleman wanted to make it appear, for there were provisions in it whereby a permit could be obtained for driving sheep at any time.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked whether the Wairarapa was the only place from which the honourable gentleman had received objections to that provision.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE had not said that: in fact, he had received objections from most places in the North Island. In the section which provided against the driving of stock by night there was a provision that a permit could be given by a Justice of the Peace to do so, and surely there were a sufficient number of Justices of the Peace throughout the colony to make it easy for any farmer to get a permit to drive his stock at night. The honourable

gentleman was, no doubt, a Justice of the Peace himself, and if he wished to drive his stock at night he could give a permit to his shepherd to do so.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked, how could he, as a Justice of the Peace, refuse to give a permit to a suspected person?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said there would be no difficulty in a settler driving his sheep to a railway-station, or anywhere else he wanted to send them to, under this Act. In every district where sheep were being driven people knew those who were likely to take more than their own, and no Justice of the Peace would give a permit to a person of that class, whilst the honest settler would be sure to get a permit. Every one knew that in districts where sheep were kept there were "black sheep," and it would not be safe to let them have permits. However, that provision could be amended in Committee if honourable gentlemen thought it advisable to do so; and it might be possible also that they could devise a provision under which people in the North could drive their stock during longer hours than was permissible in the South. With regard to the other clauses that had been objected to, they were already the law, with the exceptions to which he had called attention when introducing the Bill. With regard to foot-rot, he thought that was a very bad thing to have in the working of sheep, and they knew how contagious one kind of it was. If they allowed a man whose sheep had foot-rot to mix them in the yard with other sheep, the disease would spread; but, of course, if honourable gentlemen were of opinion that foot-rot ought not to be checked, that provision in the Bill could be altered accordingly. Then, something had been said with regard to branding; but this Bill simply amended to a very trifling extent the present Branding Act. It said that every one must brand after shearing, but it did not say that they should keep on branding all the year round. Some people in the South had large numbers of sheep shorn, and under the existing Act it was impossible for the owners of stray sheep to tell, after the wool had been taken off, whether their sheep were among those shorn, nor was it possible to tell who it was that had shorn the sheep; whereas under the proposed Bill it would be necessary to brand the sheep after they had been shorn, and then every one would be able to ascertain where they were shorn. With regard to the penalties, to which much reference had been made, he would ask honourable gentlemen, before they arrived at a decision, to read "The Brands and Branding Act, 1881," "The Diseased Cattle Act, 1881," and "The Sheep Act, 1890"; and they would find that nearly every provision contained in this Bill in this respect was in those Acts. They would then see that it was not proposed to inflict heavier penalties than at present existed. It was not his intention to take up any longer time. He had simply pointed out that a large number of the provisions in this Bill were the law at the present time, and he might say that some

honourable members could not have read up the subject or they would have known that such was the case.

Bill read a second time.

STAMP BILL.

Mr. REEVES, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was a measure containing certain details. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th sections provided a certain means by which evasions of the Stamp Act might be checked. In all cases these provisions were declared by the officers of the Stamp Department to be absolutely necessary to prevent evasions of the Act, not merely evasions feared, but evasions which had been positively met with from time to time. The 2nd and 3rd subsections of section two related to the stamp duties charged upon sales of Native land. A very ingenious method had been found lately by certain sharpwitted practitioners of avoiding penalties. As honourable members knew, by the Act of 1891 all leases of Native land were exempted from duty. By that Act, also, it was provided that, where the land was sold, the person liable to pay the duty might deduct from the value of the land the value of any lease. When a piece of Native land was to be sold a long lease was first given of it, and no duty was payable on the lease. Then, when the duty on the freehold came to be payable, the persons concerned proceeded to deduct the value of the lease from the value of the land. The result of this was that, first of all, they paid no duty on the lease, and, seeing that a long lease took up nearly the whole value of the land, they actually paid no duty on the value of the land. This Bill was to prevent the Stamp Department from losing a considerable amount of revenue. If time had permitted, these sections would have been passed last session. It was an absolute necessity they should be passed now, otherwise the revenue would suffer considerably. Sections 3 and 4 related to the stamping of policies. Under the Act of 1892 any person who wished to effect an assurance at sea had to do so by a proper policy, and such policy was to be stamped. The Act permitted it to be stamped within fourteen days after execution, or after receipt. They used to forget to have the policy stamped within the prescribed time, and then, owing to some extraordinary freak on the part of the draftsman of the Act, they were not required to have it stamped at all. The custom had grown up of having these policies executed, and not stamped, unless the insurers saw that some casualty was likely to overtake the ship. They then came rushing into the office and got their policies stamped. But unless there was some rumour or dread of danger the office heard nothing of these policies. Section 5 was the provision mentioned in the Governor's Speech at the beginning of the session, or in the Financial Statement, with reference to the proposal to exempt wages from payment of receipt duty. The loss of revenue would not be great, because, in consequence of this necessity for a stamp, receipts were not generally given

for wages, or the receipts were not stamped. By the abolition of stamps on receipts for wages a good deal of inconvenience and grumbling would be avoided, without much loss of revenue.

Sir J. HALL asked what was intended by subsection (1) of section 2.

Mr. REEVES said that was a re-enactment.

Sir J. HALL asked if it made any alteration.

Mr. REEVES said it did not.

Mr. PARATA wished to say something about this Bill, because it dealt with Native lands. The late Premier introduced and passed a measure doing away with the 10-per-cent. duty on Native leases, and he (Mr. Parata) failed to see why this Bill should now be introduced, imposing a 10-per-cent. duty on certain Native leases. Now, it affected Native land in two ways: in the case of sales and in the case of leases: the 10 per cent. was to be paid in either case. He did not wish to detain the House at all, but he would like to ask the Minister in charge of the Bill if he would consent to have it referred to the Native Affairs Committee, so that they might make some inquiry as to the class of leases affected—whether they might be for a term of twenty-one years, thirty years, or upwards—and take action accordingly. It was generally supposed that in the present state of the law Natives could only lease their land for twenty-one years, and he failed to see why this Bill was necessary so far as it dealt with Native lands. He wished to ask the Minister if he would consent to refer the Bill to the Native Affairs Committee after the second reading had been agreed to.

Mr. REEVES would be very glad to confer with the honourable gentlemen representing the Native race after the second reading, and, if necessary, the Bill could be referred as desired; but he thought he should be able to thoroughly explain this section to them, so that a reference of the Bill to the Committee would not be necessary.

Mr. LAKE was understood to say that he was surprised that no notice was taken in this Bill of what would follow if the clause referring to Native lands was adopted. In the Rating Act Amendment Bill they proposed to tax the Natives equally with the white man; and to have this 10-per-cent. duty continued when they proposed to tax the Natives equally with Europeans was unfair, and therefore provision should be made accordingly.

Mr. RHODES said it was quite arguable whether the 10-per-cent. duty on the purchase of Native lands should not be done away with. If they were going to keep the 10 per cent. on the purchase of Native lands, these amendments should be put through, because, if they did not, people could try to see how they could avoid payment of duty on freehold. They would possibly take a lease for a long period—say, 999 years—and buy the reversion for 10s., and pay duty on the 10s., and not on what they had given for the lease. The Legislature must keep the 10 per cent. on the purchase or lose the whole duty.

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Mr. KAPA said he too should like to have this Bill referred to the Native Affairs Committee; otherwise he should have to oppose the second reading of the Bill. He certainly objected to the Bill in its present shape. He hoped the Minister would agree to this reasonable request the Native members were making; and he thought it would save time if the Minister did so, because, no doubt, when the Bill got to the Native Affairs Committee the honourable gentleman would be able to show them the necessity of the measure becoming law. He felt very unwell, but he had stayed in the House purposely to watch the introduction of this measure.

Mr. TAIPUA said petitions were coming in every day protesting against the proposed legislation dealing with Native lands. Next day he would have to present many more petitions protesting against these Native Bills, and he believed that would be his painful duty every day for some time to come. He quite failed to see what their crime had been, that the Government should treat them as they were doing. No previous Government ever treated the Native people in so unjust a manner. He thought the Government ought to be satisfied with the large profit they made out of the Native land, considering they obtained it at a very small price and sold at an advanced price. They ought to be satisfied with that. It was said that the Natives paid nothing towards the taxation of the country, but that was quite an erroneous idea, because they paid indirectly very largely through the Customs. It seemed to him that in whatever manner the Natives disposed of their lands to Europeans they failed to get the proper value for their lands on account of the conflicting laws, and of the great expenses attendant upon dealing with them. It seemed to him that the Maori people were being treated in a most shameful and most uncalled-for manner, and they were being degraded in every possible way; and, notwithstanding that they were an independent people, and that they had been protected by sacred treaties, those treaties had been no protection to them, and they were no better off than were people living in other islands whose rights had not been given to them by any treaty whatever.

Mr. FISHER rose to a point of order. He gathered from the speeches of the Native members that this Bill affected the Native race; and there was a Standing Order which provided that Bills affecting the Native race should be interpreted and placed in possession of the Maori members. Might he ask if this was a Bill of that nature, and, if so, whether the Standing Order had been complied with?

Mr. SPEAKER said it did not appear to him that the Bill imposed any new taxation on the Native race. The section referred to was apparently intended to prevent the evasion by Europeans of an existing Act.

Mr. BUCHANAN said the Standing Order said, "Bills affecting the Native race," and this Bill did so.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable member for the Western Maori District had not approached the Bill in the least. His remarks had been in regard to general legislation, and to the general treatment of the Native people by the present Government.

Mr. BUCHANAN said he desired to have Mr. Speaker's ruling on the Standing Order referred to.

Mr. SPEAKER said the arguments of the Native members were directed to the effect that there was some new disability imposed on the Native race; but the present Bill, apparently, did not impose a new disability. If it did impose any new burden, or in any way specially affected the Natives, then, unquestionably, it ought to be translated.

Mr. FISHER said there was a clause in the Bill dealing with Native-land duties, and he asked whether the Bill ought not to be translated.

Sir J. HALL said the Standing Orders provided that Bills affecting the Native race should be translated. Part of this Bill clearly affected the Natives, and, at any rate, it was a Bill which certainly ought to be brought to the knowledge of the Natives, and that could not be done unless it was translated.

Mr. SEDDON might point out that the Customs tariff, or any other measure, of course affected the Native race, but it would not be necessary to translate such measures.

Sir J. HALL said the Premier evidently had not read the Bill. The Bill contained a clause dealing with Native-land duty.

Mr. SEDDON said it was simply a provision of the existing law.

Mr. SPEAKER thought that portion of the Bill, at any rate, ought to be translated for the information of the Maoris.

Mr. REEVES said he would get it translated, and he would be exceedingly happy to meet the Native members after the Bill had been read a second time, and confer with them on the subject, and explain as far as he could the exact scope of the Bill.

Mr. TAIPUA said if the honourable gentleman would consent to refer the Bill to the Native Affairs Committee there would be an end of it. If the honourable gentleman could not see his way to agree to that, then he would have to continue his remarks in opposition to the measure. If the honourable gentleman would meet their reasonable request, then they would be satisfied. He had stated that he (Mr. Taipua) was speaking about legislation affecting the Natives generally, but he considered that he was speaking in opposition to the measure now before the House. What he objected to in the Bill was the proposal that leases of over twenty-one years would be liable to a duty of 10 per cent., which would stand in the way of the Natives dealing with their land in a satisfactory manner. It seemed to him that in all the measures dealing with Native lands introduced during the present session the Government proposed to deal with the Natives in a very exceptional manner. If the honourable gentleman would not consent to

refer this Bill to the Native Affairs Committee, then they had no other alternative than to oppose it. He was not aware of any previous Government having treated the Natives so unjustly as the present Government proposed to do. He was fortified in this statement by the number of petitions that were coming from all parts of the Island to the House at the present time. The Natives had never been overwhelmed in the past with such misfortunes as now appeared to be coming upon them. On a former occasion the late Mr. Taiwhanga and himself had to oppose at great length legislation the Government of the day was introducing. On that occasion they had to stand up in their places and speak for two or three days and nights. He was glad to say the course they had to adopt on that occasion was a very unusual one for them to adopt; but it had this effect: that they were able to stave off the evil day; they were able to get the most objectionable features of the Government measures withdrawn on that occasion. At present those Natives who owned property in the vicinity of towns had to bear their share of the rates. Now, notwithstanding that they paid their share of the rates, they could not get the rates expended in any way for the benefit of their own properties, despite the request they made to the local bodies. And it should also be remembered that at present the Natives had no representation whatever on the local bodies, and the local bodies took good care not to expend the rates on any places where they would be benefited directly or indirectly by the local expenditure. They were therefore forced to the conclusion that they would not get fair-play from these people. There were two Bills on the Order Paper which really went together, and he asked the Government to agree to have them referred to the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. REEVES asked if he was to understand the honourable gentleman to request that these Bills should go to the Native Affairs Committee, If this was so he could not promise that they should go to the Native Affairs Committee, because as regarded the one now under discussion it was not a Bill of such a character as should go there—it was simply a Bill to prevent certain evasions of the Stamp Act; and, as to the next Bill, the question of its reference would be dealt with when it came up.

Mr. TAIPUA thought this Bill was one that should be referred to the Native Affairs Committee, because it dealt with their land; and it was not right to say that they were not affected by it in any way. If the Government refused to refer it to the Native Affairs Committee it would make the Natives more dissatisfied than ever about it. They would think it was worse, perhaps, than it really was. No serious harm could come, and no inconvenience could be caused to the Government if they consented to refer it to the Native Affairs Committee, and, at any rate, it would give the Native members an opportunity of finding out the real scope and object of the measure. Previous Governments always met their objections and consented to have their Bills referred to

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the Native Affairs Committee, but the present Government seemed to be averse from doing that. Now, he made an appeal to the honourable members who were sitting on the Opposition benches: he wished them to consider the unfortunate position in which the Natives had been placed on the present occasion. He had never known any Government so arbitrary or so unjust in their treatment of the Native people as the present Government was. He thought the confiscation and the war which the Native people had to go through a few years ago were infinitely preferable to the present mode of dealing with the Natives and their lands. But it should also be remembered that in all the wars which had taken place in New Zealand the loyal Natives had stood by the Government on those occasions, and had fought against the people of their own race, and that during the late war there were always between twenty and thirty thousand Natives who remained loyal, and felt bound to make some return to the Queen for the love she had displayed to them in the Treaty of Waitangi. Up to the present time the Natives had not been the offenders in setting the treaty aside. The Treaty of Waitangi was still in force, with the exception of one part, which gave the Natives the right to sell to Europeans as well as to the Government, and that alteration in the Treaty of Waitangi was not made at the instance of the Native people, but it was brought about by that House.

Mr. SPEAKER wished to give honourable members, and particularly the Native members, every possible latitude in discussing the Bill, but the honourable gentleman would see, he thought, that his remarks were not in order unless he was able to show some connection between the Treaty of Waitangi and the Bill before the House. The honourable gentleman must address himself to the proposals contained in the Bill.

Mr. CARROLL wished to make a suggestion to the honourable member. The Minister in charge of the Bill had already made a proposition—namely, that if there was any particular objection to the clause to which the honourable gentleman referred, he should allow the second reading of the Bill to pass that night, and then he and the other Native members might meet the Minister and confer with him in regard to this clause. If there was any objection of the nature of that which the honourable gentleman apprehended, then he (Mr. Carroll) for one—and he was sure his colleague also—would do what was right in the matter. There was no necessity to send this Bill to the Native Affairs Committee, but attention would be given to the honourable member's objection if the proposition he made was accepted. He thought himself it was the fair course. There was no change proposed in the law except this: that, there having been evasions of the Act, it was intended to meet them. In 1891, as the honourable member would remember, with his assistance, and with the assistance, in fact, of the whole of the Native members, by interviewing the Government, they got the Govern-

ment to do away with the 10 per cent. then charged on leases up to twenty-one years. Since then Europeans leasing lands from the Natives had attempted to evade the Act by contracting for leases for ninety years, which was equal to a freehold. That was the point. Hence, this clause was being brought in in the present Bill to meet cases which might be of a suspicious character—which did not prove to be that which they seemed to be on the surface. He would therefore suggest to the Native members that they should meet the Minister the following day, and confer with him about this Bill so that the matter might be settled fairly and equitably.

Mr. BUCKLAND suggested that it would meet the difficulty if words were put into the Bill to meet the case where the leaseholder and the purchaser were the same person. It was a manifest injustice to the Natives, if, for instance, they leased land to him, and another person bought it, that they should have to bear the stamp duty because they leased to him. A great wrong would be worked on the Natives in that way, and people would try to evade the law. No matter how they looked at it, the Native must pay the 10 per cent.; it had to come off his land. If the person who leased the land was taxed, as he ought to be, there would be no evasion. If he had leased the land honestly, and then have sold it afterwards, he did not see why the Native owner should have to pay the tax. They ought to encourage leasing, but they were now going to tax Natives in every possible direction. They talked a great deal about the Natives being treated on equal terms with themselves, and yet now they were going to put on a stronger turn of the screw in the taxing of their land. That was not treating them fairly, as they ought to be treated. He hoped the House would be fair to the Natives, and not harsh, as they seemed to be going to be.

Sir J. HALL suggested that if the Native members were not satisfied with the result of the interview that had been suggested the two clauses might be referred to the Native Affairs Committee. This would not take long, and would satisfy the Native members, who would know that every consideration was being shown them. He thought such a proceeding would save time.

Mr. REEVES said the two clauses could be translated at once, and if the honourable gentlemen would meet the Native member of the Executive and himself there would not be the slightest difficulty in explaining to them the whole operation of the clause. If they still objected, he supposed they would object, and all the discussion in the Native Affairs Committee would be hardly likely to modify that objection.

Mr. PARATA was quite prepared to agree to the proposal.

Mr. TAIPUA was quite willing to accept the suggestion of the Minister.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at a quarter to one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 22nd August, 1893.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Reading—
Education Endowments—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Customs and Excise Duties Bill, Rohe Potae
Investigation of Title Bill, Mangatu No. 1
Empowering Bill.

SECOND READING.

Gore Electric Lighting Bill.

THIRD READING.

Juries Bill.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY moved, *That this Council approves of the lands described in the Paper No. 56, laid upon the table on the 30th June, being permanently set aside as endowments for education.* He explained that some endowments had been made for primary education and some for school-sites. Particulars of those endowments were contained in a paper which had been laid on the table on the 22nd June, and they had been duly gazetted according to law. It was now for the Council to decide whether to confirm these reserves. By the Land Act of 1892, section 230, it was required that a description of the land to be reserved should be laid on the table of both Houses, and that a resolution of both Houses should be passed approving of such reserves. He thought there would be no difficulty in honourable members arriving at the conclusion that the reservation ought to be confirmed.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI asked if it would not be proper to refer this matter to the Waste Lands Committee, in accordance with the Standing Order lately passed by the Council.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY had no objection to that course, but thought it would require an adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee. He had been endeavouring to ascertain what the paper referred to, but had not been able to see it; it was not to be found on the table. Honourable members would like to know exactly what was required by this resolution. He thought it would be better to refer it to the Waste Lands Committee, to report upon. He would therefore move, as an amendment, *That the question be referred to the Waste Lands Committee.*

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said there was really nothing before the Council to which the amendment could apply. There was a motion, to which an amendment was moved by the Hon. Mr. Reynolds. Until the motion was carried it could not be merely referred to the Waste Lands Committee. If it were

carried there would be no objection to that course.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN thought the Waste Lands Committee should advise as to whether this was a proper reserve to be made permanent or not, and until the Committee so advised then he did not think the Council would be inclined to pass the resolution as it stood. He would support the amendment, though possibly it might not be strictly in order. He understood the amendment was that Paper No. 56 should be referred to the Waste Lands Committee.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said that was the case.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY thought there could be no harm in referring the paper to the Waste Lands Committee. He did not understand the meaning of the motion. The practice for the last fifteen years had been for the Waste Lands Boards to recommend the Governor to make reserves for primary education, and that had been done under various provincial and colonial Acts. Waste Lands Boards made reserves accordingly to the extent of 5 per cent. of waste lands offered for sale, which he thought was a very good thing for the purpose of promoting education. Those reserves were held until Parliament chose to alter their destination. They were leased by the Education Commissioners for twenty-one to thirty years. Hitherto the papers had simply been laid on the table of both Houses, and, unless any hostile resolution was passed, the lands were reserved for primary education. There was, of course, no harm in referring the paper to the Waste Lands Committee, but it was an entirely new departure, and he did not see the necessity of it.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said it might be perfectly true what the honourable gentleman who moved the amendment had said about not being able to see the papers, and he thought there should be no difficulty in submitting the matter to the Waste Lands Committee. With regard to the motion, he presumed the Government were satisfied that the reservation was necessary, or they would not have proposed it. If the Waste Lands Committee raised no objections there could be no difficulty in the way of passing the motion.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said it was an absolute requirement of the law that, when a reserve was being made for primary education, there should be a reference to both Houses for approval, so as to make the reserve complete. He thought there could be no objection to set aside large reserves for the educational requirements of the future. On the present occasion the Government had done quite right, and he should vote for the motion.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY saw no objection to referring the paper to the Waste Lands Committee, but he would like to know how his resolution would then stand. It might negative his resolution. He would ask the Council to agree to adjourn the debate, so that the matter could be referred to the Waste Lands Committee, especially as honourable

members appeared to wish for full information in the matter.

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could renew his motion after the Committee had reported.

Amendment, to refer Paper No. 56 to the Waste Lands Committee, agreed to.

ELECTORAL BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Sir, it is a little difficult after the lapse of some days to resume an interrupted speech without repeating oneself somewhat, but I will endeavour to avoid this, and I hope the Council will excuse any involuntary lapse on my part. I have endeavoured to show that the agitation which is at present going on for woman's suffrage is not one that arose at first on the merits of the case itself, but that it is greatly dependent upon the agitation which has arisen on another subject altogether; that the enormity of the issues at stake have not been realised by the greater number of those who are agitating upon this subject; that those issues strike at the very foundation of the laws of our social life—laws that rule the relationship between the sexes; that we know of only one experiment, which is now on its trial in one young community in the United States; that we have received very little information from this experiment, and that the little we have heard of it is a warning to be careful as to the steps we are taking. I was speaking, when I was interrupted last Friday, on the danger of putting power into the hands of perhaps the least worthy of the sex, to the great detriment of the best feminine influences. Sir, one of the cries, and perhaps the most effective, in this agitation has been that men and women should be put on an equal footing in all things; and this leads us at once to ask, What is meant by equality in all things? I do not believe there is any one in this Council who would not be most eager to give equal rights to women with those given to men in all matters that affect their interests, their education, their prospects, and their true rights; and I believe that all over the world, throughout the Legislatures of English-speaking races, one Parliament is vying with another to meet all the wants of women, and to do away with every disability under which they have suffered in the past. Considering this, Sir, we may ask, why has this hysterical outcry arisen, and why are we so anxious to precipitate this revolution when we do not know the results that may arise? We do not yet see the result of the experiment which has been tried in the country where they have been very fond of trying experiments in favour of what is called the emancipation of women. We have seen certain laws passed in that country which have struck, in our opinion, at the very foundation of society. Divorce-laws have been passed in certain parts of the United States which have startled the world; and it is in this country of divorce-laws that this one experiment has been tried, the results of which we are too

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impatient to wait for. I have heard some of those who are now supporting this enormous leap in the dark complain bitterly of the blundering, experimental legislation to which this country has been subjected lately. Surely, Sir, no one in the world ever knew, or ever heard of, a case in which two wrongs will make a right; and yet there are honourable gentlemen who think that they can mend the whole effect of this experimental legislation by precipitating another which is infinitely more hazardous than any experiment we have yet made. I believe, myself, that the influence of women is greater than that of men now; but it has been said that women have a right to exercise that influence directly, and not indirectly, and that indirect influence is underhand influence. Well, if people would only think a little they would not venture to maintain such a proposition, in the face of what we see going on every day. I am sure that most honourable gentlemen in this Council have read a very noble protest that was made, I think, in the year 1869, and published in the *Nineteenth Century* by some of the most distinguished women in England against woman suffrage. Surely there was nothing underhand about that protest. It exercises considerable influence upon this discussion to-day. There was nothing about it to indicate that it was exercised in an apologetic or underhand fashion. For quiet power, for logical argument, for clearness of statement, for dignity of tone, I do not think that protest could very easily be equalled. I hope that those who have not read that protest will read it, and I think it will be worth the while of any of us who read it some time ago to read it again. The women who signed that protest felt that they would be endangering the influence of women if they pitted their votes at the polls against the votes of those who have, and always must have, the physical power upon which all political Constitutions rest, and which they must fall back upon in times of peril. They felt, too, that, if in time of excitement bands of political Amazons were seen at the polls, there would arise an inevitable feeling of disgust, and mistrust of feminine influence, not so much amongst men as amongst women. And these are points which, I think, we ought to very carefully consider when we talk about equal rights between men and women. Sir, if once women give up the *rôle* they have always so usefully occupied, the *rôle* of suggesting, advising, encouraging, peace-making, in order to become political combatants themselves, they will do more to deprive themselves of their influence than in any other way. Sir, there is a constant discussion going on nowadays—and, I think, a very idle one—as to the relative abilities of the two sexes. For my part, I believe that the average intellectual ability of both sexes is very much on a par; but the distinctive character which those abilities take is very marked. And in that distinction lies all the charm of social intercourse, all the grace of life, and more than half the inspiration of genius. If we could ob-

literate this distinction we should have a very unlovely state of society, without manliness and without womanhood. If it were possible for us to obliterate this distinction, and women were able to take up all the duties of men, surely, then, Sir, men would have to do some of the duties of women. It is a logical conclusion—a logical sequence. No nobler *rôle* was ever intrusted to men than that intrusted to women in all ages—the earliest education of children. To them we trace the ineffaceable impress stamped upon the first years of a rising generation. I ask, Sir, whether women are prepared to give up such a *rôle* as this—to hand over the care, perhaps, of the school-room and nursery to men—in order that they may be able to fight publicly with men on all public questions, however delicate those questions may be, however disagreeable, however absolutely disgusting in their details. Is this the way in which the dignity and self-respect of man and woman are to be vindicated? It is a prospect I do not like to dwell upon. Not very long ago I saw a report of a speech by a woman orator on an American platform. It was a vehement speech—a speech that sounded shrill even through print. She was very bitter upon the feebleness of man—Goodness knows she had cause for that—and she was very great upon the manliness of women—I do not think a much more pleasant subject—and she wound up with a violent diatribe against what she was pleased to call chivalry. She wanted rights, not condescension! I have never thought that chivalry was a mere magnanimous condescension to weakness. On the contrary, it was a grateful recognition of moral strength,—a worship of an ideal purity greater than men could attain to, and a resolution to protect that moral strength and that purity from the disadvantages of physical weakness. But, Sir, we are to get rid of all these visionary follies of chivalry, and women are to be allowed and encouraged to come down into the arena and to fight their own battles,—and ours,—by dint of their own strength and their own reason. Women are no longer to be mere women, and men and women are to have all things in common. Who will suffer first,—who will suffer most, when women have bartered their dignity and self-respect for vulgar notoriety and wordy warfare between excited women and rough-tongued men?—when, perhaps, some hermaphrodite Parliament lays a sacrilegious hand on the family, on everything that is most sacred to women? Then there will be a sorrowful recollection of the day when the influence of the best women was paramount—when women were women and when men were men. This is the first downward step, not the less dangerous because we do not see the precipice which is below. The descent is easy; but the ascent! With what sorrow and humiliation and shame we may have to tread this upward path hereafter! Are we to give up, are we to sacrifice, what we know for what we do not know? Is all the growing influence of women, which has done so much in the past,

and which might do so much in the future, to be imperilled because some people think one particular reform is not moving fast enough? Is this a specimen of the wisdom we are to look forward to under the new dispensation? Cannot women recognise the work that lies before them now? Do they believe there is not work now, and to spare, for women? For my part, I have found that all the thoughtful women that I have met have more work than they can do, and work that only women can do. I confess I have some suspicion, some mistrust, of the "misunderstood" of both sexes—of people who want always to do the work of other people and not their own. Depend upon it, the work of the world was never done by those who neglected that which was at their very doors. Every reform must come by degrees and by natural means, by legitimate means. Is this Council, because a cry has been well worked up, and because it is becoming louder—are we to abdicate our functions and swim with the stream? Is it our duty to give way because we hear that this change is in the air, that this reform is coming, and we had better let it come? Sir, half the wrongs the world has suffered have been suffered because those who saw the right were not determined to stand by the right to the bitter end. It is the greatest mistake we could ever make to say that, because we think a thing may be coming, therefore we had better let it come. We must not bow, like Eastern slaves, to what we are told is the inevitable. Sir, there should be on such a great constitutional question a mandate from the country to the Legislature. Can we for a moment say there has been such a mandate in this case? I have heard it said that there was a mandate because some honourable gentlemen, perhaps even a good many candidates, addressed their constituents upon this subject. But, Sir, that is not the way in which the voice of the country is to be taken on such a great constitutional change. Such a change as this should be brought down to the country under the sanction of a Government, as a question upon which they would stand or fall, and the constituencies should be asked to give a decided vote, "Yes" or "No," upon the subject. Is it not important enough? Can a more important political question ever be brought before the country than that of doubling the electors in the constituencies? Can a more important social question be brought before the country than that of revolutionising the relation between the sexes? Surely, Sir, if ever there was a case which required that there should be a mandate from the country this is one. We have been told that it would not be constitutional on the part of the Council to throw out this Bill, because it has been sent up three times from the House of Representatives. Sir, it has been sent up three times, after a fashion; but we have a right to ask, how? Yes, three times by the same representatives in one Parliament—but it has never gone to the people. If there had been a mandate from the country

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it would have been the very first duty of the Government to bring down a Bill to give effect to the voice of the people. But what was done? Why, Sir, the very reverse of that was done. In 1891, directly after the general election, the Government brought down an Electoral Bill in which not the slightest mention was made of the woman's franchise. Neither the Government nor the Legislature dreamt of there being such a thing as a mandate; and it was not until a private member passed a Bill through the House of Representatives giving the woman's franchise, that the Government took the matter up at all. At this very time, although the Government have included woman's franchise in this year's Electoral Bill, and sent it up to the Council again, the honourable gentleman who had previously carried his measure in the House of Representatives so little trusted the sincerity of the Government or the Legislature that he has another Bill on the Order Paper in another place, and has got it through its second reading. As we are challenged on constitutional grounds, let me press on your attention the manner in which the question has been treated by this Parliament. It has been forced by an enthusiastic advocate of woman's suffrage upon an unwilling Government. It has been patronised with indifference; it has been flouted by strategy; and now a bantling has been sent up to this Council with the brand of illegitimacy upon it, while the real father is following close behind, breathless and suspicious, with the legitimate child in his arms! Is this the way in which a great constitutional question is to be dealt with? Is this the great constitutional precedent which this Council is to indorse? Sir, if a measure like this, a measure affecting the interests of generations to come, is to be dealt with in a way like this, all I can say is that the sooner the Council is got rid of the better. What is our duty here? Why are we placed here in an independent position? It is in order to see that no great constitutional change is effected behind the backs of the people of this country. If through timidity or indolence we neglect this duty, we have no right to be here. I earnestly appeal to this Council, especially to any of my honourable friends who have the smallest doubt upon this subject, to remember the inalienable right of all women to exercise their legitimate influence upon a question which affects them so deeply, and the inalienable right of every elector to give a deliberate vote upon so momentous a subject.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Sir, after the eloquent speech which has fallen from the honourable gentleman, and which has, perhaps, raised the temperature of most honourable members, I think it would be wise on my part, ere I address myself to the subject on which we have listened with so much pleasure to my honourable friend, to notice some of the other less exciting subjects with which the Electoral Bill deals. First, Sir, the characteristic of this debate, to my mind, and one which has struck me most, is the fact that the Council has been

addressed by several of those honourable members most recently added to our numbers. We have seen, that the expectations formed of them by the other members of this Council on their taking their seats have been justified and have been realised. We notice that they are not slavish adherents of the Government. We see, that they dare to think for themselves, and that they are prepared to give their votes according to their real opinions. I think, Sir, that the Council and the country are to be congratulated. Well, the Electoral Bill is very much the same Bill that we had before us last year. It comes to us nearly in the same form in which it came on that occasion. I note with some regret that the amendments which the Council made last year have had no respect or regard from the Government, and that not one of the amendments which the Council then introduced is contained in the Bill now before us. I think it is a pity, Sir. Taking the subject in order, clause 8, which the Council amended last year in a very useful direction, ignores the amendment which then was made. The clause directs that certain persons shall be ineligible to vote—aliens, lunatics, or persons of unsound mind, and persons attainted or convicted of any treason or felony. The Council last year deprived of the vote those persons who were receiving charitable aid in any charitable institution in the colony. That does not appear in this Bill; and I think it is a great pity, because I think that, by obliterating the distinction between those who pay their way and who maintain themselves, and those who do not, we are destroying a safeguard, and we are administering some discouragement to thrift, and, in fact, to morality. Many of those who are in receipt of charitable aid are doubtless deserving, and are reduced through no fault of their own; yet the great majority are in that deplorable condition through inherent defects in their character; and it seems to me that we ought to follow the example which is set in New South Wales. I have just had shown to me a provision in the Bill which was passed in New South Wales this year regulating parliamentary elections, in which the following disability appears. [Extract read.] I think we should do well to follow the example of the neighbouring colony in that particular. Well, then, clause 13 of the Bill deals with a principle which is called the one-man-one-vote principle; and the fact of any person having his name on more than one roll is made for the first time a penal offence:—

“Any person as aforesaid who, knowing his name to be on more than one roll, fails to give the notice hereby required to be given to any Registrar within the time mentioned in this section, shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds, and shall not be entitled to vote at any election so long as he knowingly allows his name to remain on more than one roll.”

Well, Sir, that is, I think, a monstrous proposal. How can a person prove that he did not know? I do not see how he can. I

do not object to the principle of “one man one vote” if the one man and the one vote could be made to express the true feeling of the country; and, Sir, we have had offered to our judgment on previous occasions a system which would justify us, I believe, in adopting this principle of the “one man one vote”—a system by which every man's vote would have the utmost possible chance of having some effect on the election of a representative, and of that voter being represented really in the counsels of his country. I allude of course, as every member will recognise, to the system of proportional representation. The system has for the present sunk out of view, but, I believe, only temporarily. I believe, as political education goes on, and as the recognition spreads of the defects of our present system, resort will be had to the proportional system, which will amend the inequalities of power which exist amongst us under the present system. Under the present system a minority only less in number by one vote than the majority may be deprived of all political power, and there is a possibility of an actual minority electing a majority in the House of Representatives. Sir, this is a system which to recognise is to condemn, and I take this opportunity, because I think it is my duty, of bringing to the notice of this Council once more the merits of a system which I hope before long to see adopted. Well, Sir, then in clause 14 we have a provision that electors who may be temporarily absent from their homes—temporarily absent from the district in which they are registered—if they have been in another district one month only, may have their names transferred to the electoral roll of that district. I regard that as designed to manufacture faggot votes. We know districts—districts that are enjoying the sunshine of Ministerial favour—which have amongst them temporarily some scores, or it may be some hundreds, of men employed. If these men are resident four weeks—one month—in a new district they can apply to have their names transferred to the electoral roll of that district, and, although only temporarily resident, they can command the whole political power which it is entitled to. That, I think, needs only to be stated to be condemned. This proposal we amended last year by altering the one month to three months, and I hope we shall succeed in doing so on this occasion. And, in speaking to the amendments which I advocate, I hope I shall not advocate a course of conduct which will imperil the Bill. I do not think there is the slightest doubt that the Bill will pass its second reading, and will go back to another place improved in some minor particulars. I hope, however, the particulars in which the Council amend the Bill will not be of such a character as to imperil it. I have the greater hope that any small amendments which we may succeed in making will not have that effect because I have already heard from some of the newly-appointed members hopes expressed that the Bill will be amended in some particulars. I now come to the burning

question—the question of the woman's franchise; and really, to listen to the speeches made against conferring the vote on women, one would suppose that we have been asleep, some of us, for the last twenty years. It is urged that this is a new proposal—the Hon. Mr. Bowen just now used the words “this sudden proposal.” Why, Sir, the proposal is as old as I am: at any rate, there is no time within my remembrance when this question was not a moot question in politics; and it has been before the constituencies during the political memory of every member of this Council. To say that we have not obtained the mandate of the people on this measure is to assert what astonishes me at any rate. We know that in the forecasts of political action which many of us read immediately after the last general election numbers were counted, and the number of votes which would be given for the conferring of woman's right to vote was absolutely correctly known before the meeting of Parliament. Declarations had been made by candidates, and a majority was returned pledged to give this needed reform. Then, Sir, the arguments which have been used against it are of the same character precisely as those which have been used against every political reform. They are as old as the hills. They are the outcome of want of confidence in human nature. Now, I should like to say one word about the action which this Council took last year on this subject. Our action has been very much misrepresented in the country. We have been maligned; our actions have been completely misrepresented. It has been represented that we insisted on conferring on women this vote in such a way as would imperil the secrecy of the ballot, and in such a way as woman did not want it conferred. First of all—and it is a complete answer to all these allegations—I would mention that the mode of voting by electors' rights which we inserted in the Bill was only optional. Every woman in the country of the age of twenty-one who chose to be registered could vote either by means of the electoral right, which she had, under our amendment, the right to demand, or she could go to the polling-booth just as men are in the habit of going. That statement quite disposes of very much of the erroneous representations which have been made, and made not by persons who did not know, but made by members of Parliament and members of the Government, who ought to have refrained from misrepresenting the conduct of one branch of the Legislature. While on this question of electoral rights, let me express my approval of some of the remarks made on this subject by honourable members who preceded me in this debate. We have been told by the Hon. Mr. Bowen that he would like the whole system to be changed to one of voting by electors' rights. In that I entirely agree with him. I believe it would do away with some of the scandals which now we have to deplore. The issue of electoral rights is no new system; we should not go into it as if making an experiment for

the first time, for it is in use in a neighbouring colony, and with the very best results. You could by this means very much simplify the electoral machinery which we are obliged to use. Now I come to deal with some of the objections to woman's franchise which we have been obliged to listen to. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore objected to conferring the right to vote on women because, he said, it would immensely increase the influence of the clergy. Well, Sir, I am at a loss to know how the influence of the clergy can be increased by women having the right to vote. There is only one Church which is supposed to influence women in any private way, and that is the Catholic Church, which in the confessional is sometimes accused of attempting to use this influence. But, Sir, a reply—

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I did not hear what my honourable friend said about the confessional. Will he please repeat it?

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I say there is only one Church which is supposed to be able to influence the opinions of people in a secret way. Do not let my honourable friend mistake me—

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—That is a most improper remark for you or any other man to make use of in this Assembly.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—My honourable friend will excuse me. I am only mentioning this as a matter of common accusation. I was mentioning it for the purpose—

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—It is not a matter of common notoriety; and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to stop this style of language.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Well, Sir, I shall not stop it, because I am within my rights, and I shall explain what I was really going to say. My honourable friend is too sudden.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I am not too sudden.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—You will permit me to say that I shall proceed to state what I intended to say. I intended to say that that could not be true, because, to my knowledge, the priesthood of the Catholic Church are opposed to the granting of this very right to vote which we are discussing. My honourable friend had better exercise his patience a little in future, and get to know what he has to object to before he objects.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I have the right of reply.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—We shall hear the honourable gentleman's reply, and I shall be very glad to hear it; and, if I have offended his sensibilities, or the sensibilities of any other person of his faith, no one would be more regretful of that than I should. It was very far indeed, I assure him and members of this Council, from my intention to reflect on the faith which for the purpose of actually defending I happened to mention, and I hope my honourable friend will accept my assurance that nothing was further from my mind than any desire to ruffle his sensibilities, or the sensibilities of members of that or any other Church. I think the fact that the clergy of the Catholic Church oppose the granting of this is a reply to

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the objection, which, I reiterate, has been expressed. And so far as the clergy of other Churches are concerned, I cannot think that the woman's franchise is open to any such objection. I do not see how, by preaching or ordinary visiting, clergymen can influence the opinions of women improperly. They are there; they occupy their posts for the purpose of influencing men and women in the direction of virtue and piety; and any danger that they would improperly influence woman voters must, I think, be discarded at once. A great deal has been said about the petitions which we have received in favour of the granting of this right to women. We all know how petitions are got up. They are got up by the energy and zeal of those who have strong opinions; and we have no right to suppose, and I do not suppose for a moment, that these petitions which have been presented in favour of woman suffrage have been got up in any other way than that which is well known to every one of us. I have the assurance that the signatures appended to these petitions are the signatures of women all of whom are above the age of twenty-one; and whatever influence petitions generally may be supposed to exercise I think these petitions will exercise. I do not suppose their influence will be great, but they are a proof of the existence in this community of a very large number of women who are anxious to exercise this right. We are told that the intentions of those who are supporters of this measure are not chivalrous. Well, surely, Sir, it is more chivalrous to trust women in the department of politics than to refuse to them the right to intervene in matters which concern them as closely as they do men. Surely there is not a want of chivalry in showing a trust in womanhood instead of the distrust which has been expressed by those who oppose it. As I have said before, the country has been appealed to, women have spoken; men, their representatives, have spoken; and we are now brought to the point of having this measure brought under our notice and subjected to our votes for the third time. I hope that we shall do our duty, not in the sense in which my honourable friend Mr. Bowen has urged us to do it, but in the direction of trust, generosity, and confidence in one-half of humanity. We were told by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore that Lord Beaconsfield, who was an advocate of woman's suffrage, anticipated that the result of granting the suffrage would be additional power given to the Conservative party. But Sir George Whitmore went on to say that that might be the effect in England, but it would not be the effect here. He distinguished between the character of women in England and the character of women in New Zealand—on what ground I am sure I do not know; he did not explain. But it seems to me our duty is to do justice, and I, for one, do not concern myself in the question of whether one party will gain additional strength or another. I do not care which party gains additional strength. I say, let right be done. We have been warned by

more than one speaker that the real intention of those politicians who are supporting this measure is that the women shall get additional power not for general political purposes, but for one purpose only, and we understand the allusion to be to the temperance movement. Well, it may be that the temperance movement will receive some stimulus from the presence of woman voters in the electorates. If it is so I am sure I do not object, and I hope this Council will not object. I believe the influence of women even on this subject will be very beneficial indeed. It may be that they will be inclined during the first years of their exercise of these newly-conferred rights to act rashly; but that is no argument against conferring the right, if it is a right. We have lived to see electoral rights of the very widest and most all-embracing kind given to men. We have seen the electoral qualification lowered and lowered still further, until now the electorate embraces nearly every man twenty-one years old. Those who voted for this extension did not do so in the expectation that the new electors would vote on every occasion in the right way—that they would not commit mistakes. They knew them to be imperfectly educated in political matters. And, in the same way, women will at first be imperfectly educated in political matters, and I have no doubt we shall see blunders committed, and the influence of women, although it may be very good—and I confidently expect it will be very good—on many subjects, will be used wrongly in some cases. You cannot learn to swim without going into the water; and the longer you restrict the electoral right to men, the longer you retain women in their present subordinate position, the longer you will deprive society of the great benefit which will be enjoyed eventually from their inclusion. We should not have the electorate composed, as my honourable friend said, of one kind of person; and the fine sensibilities, the keen perceptions, and the high moral feeling which prevail in the opposite sex will be a decided advantage to our political life. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore went on to talk of the experience of woman franchise gained in the State of Wyoming. Well, Sir, the State of Wyoming has been often mentioned in this relation, and it is quite true, as the Hon. Mr. Bowen assured us, that the right given to women to vote in the Territory of Wyoming was not given by men in a serious way. It was obtained by an accident; and it is not much to the credit of men that this great experiment, which has had so successful a trial in that State, should have been obtained by women by means of an accident. A mere political exigency, a mere party exigency, was the reason for the conferring of that right; but it was given twenty-five years ago. Three years ago, when I was in Washington, I had the pleasure of being present in the House of Representatives when the Bill was passed to make the Territory of Wyoming a State, and the Bill included as part of its constitution the women's right to vote. Well, that was three

years ago, and, so far from the experiment having been in any sense a failure, it has resulted even better for the community than was expected. I hold in my hand a document distributed throughout the world by the Governor of that State. There was a previous document issued by the Governor so long ago as 1882, when it was still a Territory, and had not reached the dignity of a State. He says,—

“Under this franchise we have better laws, better officers, better morals, and higher social conditions than could otherwise exist. The great body of our women, and the very best of them, have accepted the franchise as a precious boon, and exercise it as a patriotic duty.”

The account which my honourable friend gave us as contained in Professor Bryce's book on the “American Commonwealth,” which he, by mistake, attributed to the State of Wyoming, applied to the Territory of Washington.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—No.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Well, I must have mistaken the honourable gentleman. The experience of the population of Wyoming is exactly contrary to that which he represented it to be. The present year has seen the issue of another manifesto on this subject from the State of Wyoming; and I will read the following resolution carried in the Wyoming State Legislature on the 16th February of this year:—

“Be it resolved by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming—

“1. That the possession and exercise of suffrage by the women of Wyoming for the past quarter of a century has wrought no harm, but has done great good in many ways.

“2. That it has largely aided in banishing crime, pauperism, and vice from the State, and that without any violent or oppressive legislation.

“3. That it has secured peaceful and orderly elections, good government, and a remarkable degree of civilisation and public order; and we point with pride to the fact that, after twenty-five years of woman suffrage, not one county in Wyoming has a poorhouse.

“4. That our gaols are almost empty, and crime, except that committed by strangers, almost unknown.

“5. That, as the result of experience, we urge every civilised community on the earth to enfranchise its women without delay.

“6. Resolved, further, That an authenticated copy of these resolutions be forwarded by the Governor of this State to the Legislature of every State and Territory in this country, and to every legislative body in the world; and that we request the Press throughout the civilised world to call the attention of their readers to these resolutions.”

Now, Sir, in face of that manifesto, I hope that we shall hear no more of the failure of the experiment in the State of Wyoming. Then, Sir George Whitmore told us of the dreadful condition of Rome when women were able to obtrude themselves and their improper influences into the conduct of affairs; and he

predicted for us a decadence dating from the day when we should grant women the right to vote. Decadence, Sir! Why, we know perfectly well that the condition of women in every modern civilised country very correctly represents the state of civilisation at which the country has arrived, and the idea of a decadence taking place from the influence of women in politics is a monstrous one. But, Sir, the Hon. Sir George Whitmore went on to tell us—and in this he conceded the whole question—that the honest opinion of women would be beneficial. He had just been fighting against that proposal. If the honest opinion of women is to be beneficial to the State, what we want is to give them the power to declare their honest opinion. We had from the Hon. Mr. Campbell Walker a very strange declaration indeed. He said that, although this proposal was contained in a Government Bill, the late Prime Minister, Mr. Ballance, was not justified in including it in the Bill which we had laid before us last year—that he was not representing his colleagues in the Ministry, or the majority of the party which he led. And, Sir, he declared that he himself belonged to that party, and knew it was so. This is a very extraordinary statement, and, for my own part, I can only suppose that the honourable gentleman is incorrectly informed, and that his estimate is a mistaken one; because, if it were true, what would it involve? It would involve this: that in this country a large and important party, which at present appears to represent a majority of the electors of the country, can be led astray by a party leader who himself misrepresents the views of his followers, and that this party are being led in a particular direction against their will, or that they are so submissive to authority that they will really follow in a direction which they disapprove. Sir, that is worse than the old Tory notion of the Divine right of kings to reign. If a man intrusted with the leadership of a party for a certain purpose leads that party in an opposite direction to that for which the party combined, I do not know what our electoral system is bringing us to. It would be an extraordinary position for a community to occupy. But I think the honourable gentleman is mistaken. I think there is a very strong feeling in the country in favour of this measure of reform, and that its inclusion in a Ministerial measure proves that it comes with the approval of the people. The honourable gentleman went on to inform us that it had never passed in an important Legislature. I suppose he is not aware that it passed its second reading in the House of Commons. It is not yet upon the statute-book of Great Britain, but it passed the second reading by a considerable majority. And who are those who have been its chief upholders? There is a long list—Disraeli, Salisbury, and Balfour at Home, along with many other leading men. And here in New Zealand we have Fox, Vogel, Grey, Stout, Hall, Atkinson, Whitaker, Ballance, and Seddon. This is a very import-

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ant and weighty array; and to say that this measure has not been demanded is to simply ignore the facts which ought to be within our knowledge. The Hon. Mr. Walker went on to say, "No wonder it passed in America, the men there were so bad." That, Sir, is a confession of the whole principle. If women are so much better than men, why should we not get this increase of virtue in New Zealand as in America? Then, there is the view that we ought not to grant this because if we do it logically carries with it the right of women to sit in each branch of the Legislature. Logically it may, but the British nation has never been much of a slave to logic, and I am rejoiced that it has not. There are limits to the proper logical application of certain principles, even though they may be true; and women do not want to sit in either branch of the Legislature; but, if, in the course of political evolution, after granting the right to women to vote, they desire to sit, and if the community desire it, will any honourable member contend that we should be the worse for their companionship? I think we should be very much the better. However, that question is not really now before us; still, I should not shrink from considering it when the proper time came. I do not think it will come within my days, at any rate. Then, we are told that women, if they are permitted to vote, ought to share in all man's duties. As for their sitting on juries, as the honourable member hinted, I do not think that juries would be any the worse for women sitting among them sometimes; and I think there are some cases in which juries composed entirely of women would be a desirable improvement. Then, we had an extraordinary argument against the principle for which I am contending by my honourable friend Mr. Bowen. He said that Plato, in his "Republic," foresaw the result of making women share in certain duties with men, as family life could not then exist. That is an extraordinary twisting of anything that is contained in that immortal book. Why, the republic of Plato was an ideal State, in which no person could call anything his own. Everything was to be in common. There was no marrying or giving in marriage. There was no recognition by a parent of his children, or by the children of their parents. Only the healthy, the desirable, the handsome, and the strong children were to be preserved; the rest were to be got rid of—infanticide was to be legalised. Women were to share in all the arduous labours of men, and to be trained to war. It was only a philosophic dream, the basis of which was the abolition of the family. And for my honourable friend to say that, because Plato gave fresh duties to women, he felt compelled to abolish the family, is an ingenious twisting of his opinions, and I can be more complimentary to the ingenuity of my honourable friend than he was to this Council when he brought forward this argument. Well, what is the process of voting? A man is called on to perform it once in three years. Under accidental circumstances he may

be called upon once between one general election and another, or he might possibly vote twice in three years, and have to go to the polling-booth and record his vote in the utmost security for the free exercise of his opinion. Not even the Returning Officer is permitted to know what votes are recorded. Access to the booth is kept perfectly free, and only a limited number of people are admitted to the booth at one time. And this process of recording her vote is to unsex woman! A more monstrous thing than that this simple exercise of a common duty would unsex woman could not be suggested. It is quite a mistake to talk about masculine women. Honourable members are aware of the way in which women in the Mother-country are influencing public opinion, from the platform and otherwise. I have the honour to know some of those women, and, as speakers, they compare favourably with men. These women are as feminine and as ladylike and as full of womanly grace as any woman who seeks to hide herself beside the domestic hearth. They are influencing men in many ways most beneficially. They have proved themselves to be capable of vying with men in many professions and in many studies which were not long ago supposed to be altogether the province of men. We have only to remember Miss Ramsay, now Mrs. Butler, the wife of the respected master of Trinity College. In her final examination she obtained a double first class. And Miss Philippa Fawcett, daughter of the lamented Professor Fawcett, so distinguished herself in mathematics that there was no place among the wranglers high enough for her to occupy. She was above the senior wrangler. Those who know these ladies will know perfectly well that their high attainments have not deprived them of any of the feminine graces; they rather adorn and beautify the qualities which by nature they possessed. The opponents of woman's franchise must abandon the plea of unfitness; for how can they maintain that position in the face of the facts to which I have slightly alluded? Women have proved their fitness in every department in which they have been tried. They already vote in municipal matters; and who will say that those have been the worse for their votes? Some of them occupy honourable positions on Education Boards. I have in my mind one lady who has more than twice been appointed a member of the Education Board of her province, and she shines by comparison in the performance of those duties. In our School Boards, in educational matters, in hospital management, and in household management—for there woman's fitness is still more pronounced—they have shown their ability to thoroughly perform every kind of duty that has devolved upon them. To talk of the unfitness of women to perform public duties—the idea that this argument should be used in the reign of Queen Victoria—is absurd. What reign has been so distinguished? The times when our country has been ruled by Queens will compare very favourably with any others. Queen Anne not only presided at the Council Board

of her Ministers, but she actually sat in Parliament; and there is one notable instance where the Duke of Marlborough actually appealed to her in the course of a debate. Then, if we go back to the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, what statesman of Europe could then vie with her in statesmanship? She maintained our freedom against the greatest difficulties, and proved herself more than a match for all her adversaries. If women are to be disfranchised simply because they are unable to carry arms, what can be said of those weak men who are unable, from sickness or other causes, to perform this duty? Are they to be disfranchised on that account? I will not detain the Council longer. Society has gained by every step in the advancement of women. True it is that humanity as a whole has never up to this day had a real opportunity of showing what it is capable of. By adding women to the electorate humanity would have that opportunity, and I confidently look forward to an immense increase in the well-being of the community as a whole by giving them this right.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—Sir, the speech we have listened to from the Hon. Mr. Bowen is one which I am sure we must all admit was entirely worthy of himself, and worthy also of the important subjects we are now discussing. It was not only able, but it was a graceful and eloquent address, and it is only a matter for regret that it should have been delivered on the wrong side. I may say at once that I do not agree with the views expressed by that honourable gentleman in his speech. In fact, I take the opposite view. I agree with him, and with most honourable members, that the really important part of this Bill is the question of woman's suffrage. The Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of the Bill, referred to it as being in the main a machinery Bill; and, if we look at it simply from the point of view of its bulk, it must be admitted that he is right. But, although that is so, there are three little words in the interpretation clause of this Bill that outweigh in importance the whole of the rest of the Bill taken together. Those three words are, "Person" includes woman." Now, the arguments to which we have listened from the Hon. Mr. Bowen are of a kind, as has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, that have been from time to time urged in every period of the world's history, and, I dare say, used in connection with every proposal for reform that has been made in any country. In particular, I would remind honourable members of the Council that it is precisely this style of argument that was used at the time of the great Reform Bill in 1832; and again in 1867 we had the same style of argument; and the speeches delivered on those occasions would form, in themselves, a great branch of literature, in which would be found some of the most eminent names in English history and politics. We find among them, for instance, such names as Sir Walter Scott, Sir Robert Peel, John Wilson Croker, Sir Robert Inglis,

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and Robert Lowe. It will be considered no disparagement to the Hon. Mr. Bowen that I have associated him with such names. There have been those who, when any change in the institutions of the country, and any great advance, was proposed in the struggles for human liberty—there have been those, I say, and they have generally been men of the wisest and most influential class, who have thought it their duty, in the interest of the country, to oppose every such proposal. It is also shown, I think, with equal clearness, that, if we make an induction from experience and from history, those who have proposed reforms in the past have been proved by the result to have been in the right; and experience has also shown that, if the great reforms that have been carried out in the past had been carried out when first proposed, the result would have been beneficial to the nation. It has always been stated by those who think it their duty to resist change—and they have been by no means the least intelligent and wise of men—that they would probably have approved of the great reforms of the past; but they always seem to think that their duty in the present is to resist reforms for the time being. And that is precisely what we find to be the case now. I have no doubt that those honourable members who now consider it their duty to oppose this reform will hereafter—just as those did who opposed the great reforms of 1832 and 1867—admit that they were mistaken, and admit also that their forebodings have been belied by the course of events; because there can be no doubt that the course of events shows a humorous indifference to the reputation of prophets. There have never been wanting prophets who are ready to indulge in such prognostications as we have listened to from the Hon. Mr. Bowen. These arguments we shall have cast up to us, and we must always be prepared to meet them. I am sure that generations hereafter will express the same surprise that we are expressing now that there should be so much resistance as there is to the innovation we are now proposing. There has never yet, I think, been any proposal for any great change in any country that has not been met in the same way. The idea has been humorously expressed by the alderman who declared that the world would wake up some morning and find its throat out. And that is really what those forebodings come to that have been listened to from the Hon. Mr. Bowen. Whether or not the time is far distant when those who oppose this reform will be compelled to admit that their forebodings have been belied it is difficult to say; but those who support this change, I am sure, are convinced that sooner or later the time will come, as it came, as I have already said, in the case of those who opposed the reforms in 1832 and 1867. Now, it must be admitted that this proposal to extend the suffrage to women is a proposal to carry out a very great change in the Constitution. It must be admitted, also, that the contention that this is to a great extent in the nature of an experiment is correct. As

has been pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, one American State, and, I think, two American Territories, have made the experiment already. There is conflicting evidence as to the success of it in the States, to which the Hon. Mr. Oliver referred. But it must be admitted, as I have said, that no country equal in importance to our own has as yet made this experiment; and there is no doubt that we are in consequence without the benefit derivable from the experience of other countries. But, Sir, that is a consideration which, while I think it is entitled to a great deal of weight, should not deter us from taking action if we are convinced that the step it is proposed to take is right and justifiable. It is, no doubt, advisable that we should as far as possible, in proposing great changes on any important questions, look at them in the light of others' experience; but it has been often remarked, with regard to the Australasian Colonies in particular, that they have shown an extraordinary lack of originality in making new departures in political institutions. It has been often remarked that those colonies have followed in the most slavish manner in the wake of the Mother-country. But, Sir, I do not suggest that we should, merely for the sake of making experiments, undertake to carry out changes of so much importance as that with which we are now asked to deal. I do not for one moment suggest that we should undertake to make experiments for the benefit of other countries; but I would point out this to the Council, and it is worthy of consideration: that we are really, in this colony, in a better position for carrying out important changes of this sort than any other country perhaps in the world. We have a population that is, perhaps, superior to that of most other countries in the world. Our country is comparatively small, our population limited: at all events, it is such that it renders the trying of any experiments of this class very much more simple and easy than it would be, for example, in America. But, Sir, I do not suggest, and I do not say, that this is in itself any justification for our making such experiments; but, on the other hand, I do say that this is a consideration that rather favours the making of such experiments when we are convinced on other grounds that the proposal is in itself a right and just one. Now, I do not intend to go fully into the reasons that influence those who support this proposal. In fact, Sir, the proposition now made seems to me, and to most of us who are in favour of it, a self-evident proposition, and it seems to me that those who believe that representative government is the most perfect system of government that has yet been devised are bound to admit that, if any class in the community is unrepresented, to that extent our representative government is a failure and a disappointment. This is, broadly, the ground on which we put, in the first instance, the claim that women have for the enjoyment of the suffrage. We profess to believe that representative government is the best form of government; and it follows that all classes should enjoy repre-

sentation under that system, and that, just in so far as there is any class that does not enjoy representation, just so far is our system incomplete and imperfect. As I say, I do not intend to go fully into the affirmative argument in support of our position, but I propose rather to refer to a few—to two or three—of the arguments that are adduced in opposition to our contention. And here let me say that it must strike any one as strange that there should be so much opposition in a country like this, and in a country like England—a country that has been for so long ruled over by a woman, and in which women have so much distinguished themselves in every sphere that has been thrown open to them, and a country in which women are subjected to all the rigour of the law, subjected to all the demands of the local tax-gatherer—a community in which a large class of women are compelled to earn their own living—I say it must strike any one who considers these things that it is a very remarkable thing that there should be so much opposition to this proposal; because women have, as has been already pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver, for many years enjoyed other franchises—the municipal franchise, the education franchise, and other franchises. It is surely incumbent on those who propose to draw the line at the parliamentary franchise to show some difference not merely in degree or in measure, but in nature, between this and the franchises already conceded to women. It seems to me that no difference of mere degree is sufficient foundation on which to build this opposition to the parliamentary franchise. In every democratic community no mere difference of degree can be allowed to continue, and I think it must be admitted that we ought not to draw the line at the parliamentary franchise as distinguished from the municipal and other franchises. Now, there are three principal arguments which, I think, are used in opposition to the demands of women for the parliamentary franchise. The first is the argument that women are unfit for the franchise; and the second is the argument that the franchise is unfit for women. The third argument that I propose to refer to is that women do not wish to have the franchise. Now, as to the first and second of these objections, I think, Sir, they are in nature very much alike. It seems to me that both of these arguments have their real foundation in the old and undying law of mere "might." Men have so long possessed the exclusive rights and exclusive privileges that it is impossible for them to conceive there should be any end to this condition of things. What is implied in these two arguments is this: that we have a right to arrogate to ourselves the prerogative of saying what woman is fit for and what is fit for woman. I think I am perfectly justified in saying that these two arguments have their real foundation in the old law of the strongest. It strikes one as rather strange that those who are loudest in their objections to what is called paternal government are fondest of using this very argument. It seems to

me to be rather illogical upon the part of those who are constantly raising this objection about paternal government that they should themselves arrogate the right of saying what women should do and should not do. But these are general considerations which I would not further dwell upon. I would just now refer very shortly to the three arguments I have already mentioned. As to the question of the fitness of women to exercise the franchise: Sir, there are few men nowadays who have the hardihood to stand up before an assembly of men or women and say in so many words that women are unfit to exercise the franchise. It has been admitted here, and is now constantly admitted—and no man who is in his senses would deny it—that many women are as fit as most men, and more fit than many men, to exercise the franchise. Now, I think that this concession is really a giving-up of the whole matter, because it seems to me impossible to contend on the one hand that men are entitled to the suffrage merely on the ground of sex, and that women are disentitled on the same ground. For my part, I think that rather than admit that women are unfitted for the franchise I would contend that all women are as fit as all men to exercise this privilege; but this affirmative argument is, as I say, now very seldom given expression to. But this argument has been expressed in another way. It has been very much enlarged upon, and, in fact, distinctly affirmed by the Hon. Mr. Bowen, that politics are entirely beyond the sphere of women—that the proper sphere of women is the nursery and the kitchen, and I suppose I may add the ballroom. That is really what this argument comes to. One of the marvels of our civilisation has been the perfection to which woman has attained during comparatively recent times. There is nothing more surprising than the extent to which woman has availed herself of such opportunities as have been presented to her. Stoutly and patiently she has overcome the ignorance and brutality of men by her loyalty to her higher moral ideal. And here let me suggest that there is a good deal in the idea that it is because of her superior morality that so much opposition is shown to this demand on the part of woman to be allowed to take part in public affairs. I think it will be admitted that there must be a great deal in the suggestion, when we consider the class of men who are fondest of using this argument. It is a favourite argument with those who are afraid that the influence of women would have a disastrous effect on the liquor traffic. I think there is no other way to explain the arguments of such men. It simply amounts to this: They are really afraid of the superior influence that would be exercised by women if they were allowed to take part in public affairs. Let me refer to one of the arguments used by the Hon. Mr. Bowen in this connection. He said, very properly, and very correctly, and very happily, that it is a very objectionable process to adopt general laws to meet particular cases, and he used this argument, I presume, with

particular reference to the undoubted fact that the agitation for the extension of the suffrage to women has received within recent years a great accession of strength from an agitation going on concurrently with it in favour of the restriction of the liquor traffic. It cannot be denied that this is a statement of fact; but I do deny the application of the argument used by the Hon. Mr. Bowen. There could be no greater mistake than to imagine that the present agitation on this subject of the liquor traffic is merely transitory. This question of the liquor traffic is one phase of a very great social question, and there can be no doubt that no sooner shall we have disposed in some way or another of this phase of our social questions than some other equally important phase of our social difficulties will present itself for solution by the Legislature; and this movement to draw into the sphere of politics the superior moral influences of women in order to further the solution of such questions is really an admission of this fact, of this feeling: that the world can no longer afford to do without this superior morality of women when such questions as this liquor traffic and other questions have to be dealt with. We may rest assured it is not a mere passing matter, for all political questions will become more and more social questions, and the questions that will have to be dealt with by our legislation in the future are bound to be, in the main, social questions. That accounts for the anxiety that woman, with her superior instincts, and superior qualifications for dealing with these subjects, should be introduced in this case. This is not a mere passing agitation, but will continue; and the argument used by the Hon. Mr. Bowen that this is an attempt to pass a sweeping and far-reaching law for the purpose of dealing with an important subject is entirely a mistake.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 22nd August, 1893.

First Readings—Third Reading—Bill discharged—Mangatu No. 1 Empowering Bill—Direct Veto Bill—Land-scrip—Major Keddell—Colonel Fox—Midland Railway—Lyttelton Unemployed—Whakatane River Bridge—Manawatu Railway Company's Lands—Waikato Landless Natives—Eyre and Ashley Rivers—Libel Bill—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Juries Bill, Civil Service Insurance Bill, Public Revenues Bill.

THIRD READING.

Native Trusts and Claims Definition and Registration Bill.

Hon. Mr. MacGregor

BILL DISCHARGED.

Noxious Weeds Bill.

MANGATU No. 1 EMPOWERING BILL.

Mr. PARATA moved, That the report on this Bill be agreed to.

Mr. MITCHELSON said the objections which he raised to this Bill when it was first introduced had been greatly modified by the action of the Committee: all the objectionable features of the Bill had been removed. One of the principal reasons why he did not propose to oppose the Bill that day was that it proposed to hand over to the Native owners of the block the sole control and management of it. So far the Bill was a good one, as it was impossible to leave this valuable block of land in its present unsatisfactory position. At the same time, the policy contained in the Bill was a new departure, and, as he understood it, was utterly at variance with the proposals contained in the Government policy Bills now before the House in regard to the disposal and management of Native lands. He thought that before the House agreed to the report they should have some expression of opinion from the Government as to whether they agreed to the policy contained in this Bill or not. If this Bill were passed in its present form, then the policy contained in the Government Bills now before the House was not in accord with the proposal contained in this Bill, as that policy clearly went in the direction of taking the control of the land from the Natives. There were a very large number of blocks throughout the country similarly situated to Mangatu. If the Government allowed this Bill to pass, they could not, in justice to other Natives, consist-

ently refuse to pass similar legislation for their benefit. He thought the Government should give the House some expression of what their ideas were in regard to this Bill.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had been given to understand that this was a special case, and, that being so, they did not object to the Bill as amended going through; but the Bill as originally brought down was certainly directly opposed to the principles contained in the Government legislation affecting Native lands. The Bill as now amended only secured to those unrepresented what it was thought they were entitled to. Under the circumstances, it being treated as a special case, the Government did not object to the Bill.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read a third time.

DIRECT VETO BILL.

Mr. REEVES said that some weeks ago he presented a petition with, he thought, some four or five thousand signatures against the Direct Veto Bill. Since then he had received a letter from a gentleman named Thomas F. Asquith, who stated that his name was put on the petition without his knowledge, and requested that the fact be made public.

LAND-SCRIP.

Mr. SHERA brought up the following report of the Public Accounts Committee:—

"The Public Accounts Committee have to report that they have taken evidence, and considered the transactions in the Canterbury Land District which were referred to them, in which scrip was used in the purchase of land.

"1. The following are the transactions and their dates:—

PARTICULARS of SCRIP used in Payment of Ellesmere Lands, District of Canterbury, by Mr. J. G. Murray.

Office of Issue, and to whom Scrip originally issued.	Total Amount.	Amount issued.	Where and by Whom exercised.	† When lodged.	Total used by Mr. Murray.	Excess of Legal Limit.	Data exercised on.
Auckland— J. Paterson ..	£ s. d. 544 12 0	£ s. d. 99 0 0 445 12 0	Auckland— J. Smith Canterbury— J. G. Murray	About 1st December, 1889.	£ s. d. 445 12 0	£ s. d. ..	15th January, 1890.
	544 12 0	544 12 0					
R. M. Paterson	923 6 0	923 6 0	Ditto ..		923 6 0	423 6 0	
James Fairlie	682 12 0	94 0 0 588 12 0	.. ..		588 12 0	88 12 0
	682 12 0	682 12 0					
Carried forward		1,957 10	0 511 18 0	

† NOTE.—The sale was held on the 15th November, 1889, and on the same day 25 per cent. of the purchase-money was paid in cash. About the 1st December, 1889, the scrip was tendered as part-payment of the balance of the purchase-money. The officers of the department for some time refused to accept it, but, after some controversy, the scrip was finally accepted by the department on the 15th January, 1890.

PARTICULARS of SCRIP—*continued.*

Office of Issue, and to whom Scrip originally issued.	Total Amount.	Amount issued.	Where and by Whom exercised.	† When lodged.	Total used by Mr. Murray.	Excess of Legal Limit.	Date exercised on.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brought forward	..	..	..		1,957 10 0	511 18 0	
Auckland—							
J. Cowan ..	663 6 0	490 0 0 173 6 0	Canterbury— J. G. Murray		173 6 0	..	
	663 6 0	663 6 0					
P. S. McLean	716 6 6	490 0 0 226 6 6	Ditto ..		226 6 6	..	
	716 6 6	716 6 6					
A. J. McLean..	604 6 0	356 0 0 248 6 0	" ..		248 6 0	..	
	604 6 0	604 6 0					
F. Hubbard ..	1,008 0 0	291 0 0 187 9 0 529 11 0	" ..		529 11 0	29 11 0	
	1,008 0 0	1,008 0 0					
M. Noake ..	200 0 0	200 0 0	" ..		200 0 0	..	
					3,334 19 0	541 9 0	
Legal limit ..	..	..	£500 0 0				
Noake's scrip, Naval and Military Settlers' and Volunteers' Land Act ..	..	..	200 0 0		700 0 0		
					* 2,634 19 0	541 9 0	

About 1st December, 1889.

15th January, 1890.

† See note page 243.

PARTICULARS of SCRIP exercised in Purchase of Crown Lands by Mrs. Jessy Rhodes in the Land District of Canterbury.

To whom Scrip was originally issued.	Total Amount.	Office of Issue.	Amount exercised.	Where Scrip exercised.	By whom Scrip exercised.	Date when Scrip tendered and exercised.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.			
C. B. Knorpp	485 10 6	Auckland	485 10 6	Canterbury	Jessy Rhodes	March 25, 1891.
C. B. Knorpp	513 3 6	Auckland	513 3 6	Canterbury	Jessy Rhodes	March 25, 1891.
	998 14 0		998 14 0			

"2. The scrip lodged before the 31st December, 1889, seems to have been properly used under 'The New Zealand State Forests Act Amendment Act, 1888,' as it bears the indorsement of the Commissioner of the Auck-

land Land District, with the sanction of the Minister of Lands; save that more than £500 was used by one person. The cases in which that occurs are marked with an asterisk (*), and, so far as more than £500 was used, the

Mr. Shera

use was unlawful. The transfer of the scrip seems to be limited to £500, if he takes advantage of the 1888 Act.

"8. The scrip that has been used after the 31st December, 1890, was, in the opinion of your Committee, unlawfully used on two grounds:—

"(a.) That so issued after the passing of the Act of 1888 was not used under that Act, as section 3 was not complied with, the scrip not having been presented to the Hon. the Minister of Lands prior to the 30th June, 1889, for his indorsement.

"(b.) The scrip was used after the 31st December, 1890. It will be seen from the perusal of the decision of the Court of Appeal, in the case of Paterson and Another *versus* Humphries (New Zealand Law Reports, Vol. viii., pp. 297–307), that the scrip could only be used in the provincial district in which the tree-planting had taken place, unless the terms of the 3rd section of 'The New Zealand State Forests Act Amendment Act, 1888,' had been complied with; and these provisions were not complied with by the holders of the scrip.

"4. Mr. Knorpp's scrip was purchased by the Hon. Mr. Whyte, and by him sold to Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes, M.H.R., who exercised it on behalf of Mrs. Jessy Rhodes. Before Mr. Rhodes purchased the scrip, he obtained the opinion of the officers of the Lands Department in Canterbury, and he was informed that the scrip was in order and could be used in the purchase of land. Your Committee are convinced that the scrip was tendered by Mr. Rhodes, and accepted by the Receiver of Land Revenue, in perfect good-faith, under the impression that it was valid and negotiable in Canterbury for the full amount named upon it; and that no charge whatever can be made against either of them in regard to these transactions.

"5. That, though the scrip could not have been used in Canterbury, it could have been used in the purchase of land in Auckland to the amount of its face-value.

"6. From the evidence of Mr. Whyte, the Committee find that, by a personal interview with Ministers, in Wellington, immediately after the sale of Ellesmere lands Mr. Whyte obtained irregular and illegal concessions from Ministers as to the use of his scrip in the payment of Ellesmere lands purchased by Mr. J. G. Murray, in Christchurch, which gave illegal currency in Canterbury to a large quantity of scrip held or conditionally sold by Mr. Whyte.

"7. From the evidence of the late Minister of Lands, Mr. Richardson, the Committee find that he not only put, but that he still puts, a construction upon the laws under which he was required to act not consistent with the provisions of the 1888 Act, and that he disregarded or misunderstood the decision of the

Court of Appeal in the case of Paterson and Another *versus* Humphries.

"8. By documents and dates laid before it, the Committee find that the land officers in Christchurch overlooked or disregarded their latest instructions when accepting scrip to the value of £998 14s. from Mr. A. E. G. Rhodes, M.H.R., on behalf of Mrs. Jessy Rhodes, in payment for Crown land sold to her on the 25th March, 1891.

"9. The Committee find that information that scrip would be accepted in payment for the Ellesmere lands was obtained in a semi-private manner from Ministers or officials by persons who thus obtained an undue advantage over the general public. In justice to the public, and to the public revenue, there can be no doubt that, if scrip was to be accepted at all, timely notice should have been given to the public to that effect.

"10. However much these irregularities are to be regretted, the colony is clearly bound by the actions or errors of its Ministers and officers, and has now no practical remedy for them. The purchasers, in all cases, have complied with the demands of our Land officers, and there is no ground to justify a demand for a refund from Mrs. Jessy Rhodes, or for withholding a title for the land purchased after her agent has complied with all the conditions demanded from him by the Land officers.

"11. The Committee approve of the action of the present Minister of Lands in disallowing the surcharge against the late Receiver of Land Revenue at Christchurch."

He moved, That the report do lie upon the table, and be printed.

Mr. RICHARDSON had a word or two to say with regard to the report. It appeared to him that the matter, having been deferred until so long after date, had now been brought up with something more than a desire to ascertain the facts. It appeared to him—although he might be wrong—that it was done to attempt to politically injure the Hon. Mr. J. B. Whyte, Mr. Rhodes, and himself. He considered that in one or two particulars the report did not set out fairly and fully the position. To start with, it was assumed that undue advantage had been given to Mr. Whyte by the late Government—that the late Government had favoured unduly the exercise of scrip for the purchase of land. The way the trouble commenced was this: His predecessor, Mr. Ballance, shortly before leaving office, had caused an advertisement to be published in the public prints of the colony inviting all persons who had claims under the Forest-trees-planting Acts to send in their claims. That led to the Government being simply deluged with claims from everybody who had the slightest approach to a plantation, though it was quite obvious that in many instances those who so made application had made the plantations without any intention of taking advantage of the Act. So far as possible those claims had been resisted, a large number having been shown to be informal; but the officers of the Government approved of a great

many, amounting to a very large sum of money. So strongly did the late Government oppose the issue of scrip that they took the matter to the Court of Appeal. The matter was carried to the Court of Appeal on two or three points, the first of those points being, whether scrip issued in a provincial district could be limited under the Act of 1871 to an extent of land of 250 acres, or whether it could be limited or was limited to the extent of £500 as provided in the Act of 1888; but on all the points submitted to the Court of Appeal that Court decided against the Government all along the line. The Court decided that scrip issued or exercised in a land district with a face-value was exercisable to the full extent of that value; but it said, also, that if the holder of scrip voluntarily took it to the Commissioner of Crown Lands and had it indorsed under the provisions of the Act of 1880, then it became limited to the amount of £500 outside of the district for which it was issued. But that was a voluntary act, and one which many holders had no opportunity of making, because it was issued to them after the prescribed date was passed. One allegation raised before the Committee, and brought out in the report, was that, contrary to the decision of the Appeal Court, the Government allowed land-scrip to be exercised as cash in the purchase of the Ellesmere lands. It was true that the Government allowed scrip to be used, but it was not true that it was contrary to the decision of the Appeal Court. On page 3 of the document the position was set out in the clearest and most unmistakable language. This was the language of the Court: "The order, in short, is, for land-purchasing purposes, equivalent to cash, and no limit is specified of the quantity of land that may be purchased by it." The scrip once issued, being in all respects perfect and right, and properly issued, was a legal tender as cash for any land sold for cash, and no Government could honourably refuse it. There was one point which, it seemed to him, the Committee failed to inquire into; it was a most important point with regard to the whole question. The Court of Appeal dealt with the point with regard to the exercise of land-scrip which bore on the face of it these words: "Exercisable within the 'Land' or 'Provincial' District of" So-and-so, and their decision was that it could be exercised to the full extent. But what really affected the whole question was, that a very large quantity of scrip was issued with these words: "Exercisable in any part of the colony." Now, those were negotiable documents, transferable, and bearing on the face a certain value exercisable for cash in any part of the colony. The Government could not refuse the tender; and the point he said the Committee failed to inquire into, and what he would have liked to see inquired into, was this: How did it come about that land-scrip so faced was issued? By whose authority was land-scrip issued giving the holder the right to exercise it in any part of the colony? That seemed to him to be a most important point in the matter, and one which had been entirely overlooked. Now, following

Mr. Richardson

on with regard to the decision of the Court of Appeal—again on page 3: it went on to say,—

"This gives the key to the interpretation of the later Acts, as the Legislature must not be supposed to have passed any enactment which would constitute a breach of faith, unless the terms are beyond all question clear enough to show that no other possible construction can be placed upon it."

And, again, on the last page,—

"To decide in any other way would have led to the result that the plaintiffs had done work on the faith of a promise of the Legislature, and that the Legislature had gone back from its promise. In our opinion, it is clear, not only that no intention to evade any promise is shown, but that the various Acts, when critically scanned, indicate no suspicion of any such intention."

No authority was given by him to receive scrip indorsed under the Act of 1880 beyond £500; and the memorandum sent by his (Mr. Richardson's) instructions to the Receiver of Land Revenue in Christchurch with regard to the matter was such a memorandum as he would now send if the same thing had to be done again. It was this: "Having regard to all the circumstances"—that was, the decision of the Court of Appeal—"and the desirability of ending the matter of the forest-trees-planting scrip, no objection will be made to its being received as payment for Ellesmere lands." This was no authority to receive scrip if not proper scrip, but simply a general authority to receive scrip as cash, on the supposition that the officers who took it would see that it was proper scrip. To show how misleading, without explanation, the report was, it gave a schedule of scrip exercised, and particulars of when, and to whom, it was issued, and by whom it was exercised. In these particulars it was correct, but it failed to give information on one point—what did the scrip bear on the face of it? He said that in almost every case it bore on its face that it might be exercised "in any part of the colony." It appeared that objections had been taken by the officers in Christchurch to certain irregularities—the scrip not being properly transferred or properly signed. They said, "One of the scrip only exercisable in the Auckland District." From that it might be assumed that that was the only scrip tendered in Christchurch that was limited to the Auckland District. The report just read said, under section 3,—

"(a.) That [the scrip] so issued after the passing of the Act of 1888 was not used under that Act, as section 3 was not complied with, the scrip not having been presented to the Hon. the Minister of Lands prior to the 30th June, 1889, for his indorsement."

It could not be presented for indorsement, for the time had lapsed. Then the report went on to say that the decision of the Court of Appeal was that the scrip could only be used in the provincial district in which tree-planting took place. There was nothing of that sort at all in the decision of the Court of Appeal. The decision said the scrip was exercisable in

the district shown on the face of it, and was limited only by its face-value. It was decided on what was shown on the face of the document. So that, as a matter of fact, this portion of the Committee's report was not correct. Paragraph 5 said, "That, though the scrip could not have been used in Canterbury, it could have been used in the purchase of land in Auckland to the amount of its face-value." That also was incorrect. It should have read, "That, though the scrip could not be used in Canterbury beyond £500." With regard to section 6 of the report, he took exception to this statement as distinctly contrary to fact:—

"From the evidence of Mr. Whyte, the Committee find that, by a personal interview with Ministers in Wellington, immediately after the sale of Ellesmere lands, on the 15th January, 1890, Mr. Whyte obtained irregular and illegal concessions from Ministers as to the use of his scrip in the payment of Ellesmere lands purchased by Mr. J. G. Murray, in Christchurch, which gave illegal currency in Canterbury to a large quantity of scrip held or conditionally sold by Mr. Whyte."

In his reading, there was no "illegal currency," as he considered it to have been his duty—as it would be the duty of the present Minister of Lands if anybody lawfully held scrip giving him the right to exercise it "in any part of the colony"—the Appeal Court having decided it should be taken as cash—to accept it, for the simple reason that the Government had no right to refuse it. He took up that position. There was one point which was not brought out in this report, which, in his opinion, plainly showed its party character. The action of the present Minister was only commented upon in respect to one favourable feature; but the Committee appeared to have ignored the fact that, if he (Mr. Richardson) was a sinner,—though he did not admit that he was,—the present Minister of Lands was equally a sinner—and he did not hold the honourable gentleman was to blame either,—because the Rhodes transaction took place months after the honourable gentleman took office. He (Mr. Richardson) said he could not have refused it. But its exercise beyond £500 was against his (Mr. Richardson's) written instructions, which, as far as he knew, had never been cancelled or interfered with. So that what was sauce for one was sauce for the other, and, if he (Mr. Richardson) was to be blamed in this matter, then he felt bound to say that one-fourth of the scrip exercised in Canterbury was so exercised some three months after the honourable gentleman took office. There was, however, nothing said of that in this report, and it appeared to be one-sided.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE wished to correct the honourable gentleman. He knew nothing of the scrip; it was never brought before him; he did not know of its being used; it was never brought before him in any shape or form.

Mr. RICHARDSON said he knew nothing of what was on the face of the scrip any more

than the honourable gentleman. It was left to the officers of the department to see that it was right; but the honourable gentleman was responsible for what took place during his administration, in the same way as he (Mr. Richardson) was responsible for what took place during his administration. If it had been exercised within a few weeks of his taking office he should have said nothing about it; but the honourable gentleman had plenty of time to know, and he ought to have known, all that was going on in the matter. He was in the same position as himself in regard to it. He imputed no blame to the honourable gentleman, for the exercise of that scrip was perfectly right. If on the face of scrip it was stated that it could be exercised in any part of the colony, which, as a matter of fact, was the case, then, he asked, would any Government be justified in refusing such scrip and in dishonouring its own paper?

Sir R. STOUT might say there were some paragraphs in the report he did not agree with, and it would be seen from the division-lists that he voted against some of them. He rose to set the honourable member for Mataura right, because the honourable gentleman did not seem even to understand the case referred to in the report. He was not even now master of it; and he (Sir R. Stout) would state very shortly what was decided in the Court of Appeal. The Act showed that, if a person was to get payment for having planted trees under "The Forest-trees Planting Encouragement Act, 1871," he was entitled under our Acts to get scrip. The first provision was in the Act of 1885. Section 30 gave him £2 an acre. This was repealed by the Act of 1888, and it was the provisions of that Act that had to be considered in reference to this report. That Act provided that if persons took advantage of the Act they must present the scrip before the 30th June, 1889, and they must exercise their scrip before the 30th December, 1890. If they did that, they could get scrip in any part of the colony. They were not limited to the provincial district in which the trees had been planted. If, however, they did not take advantage of that Act, then they could only get land in the provincial district in which the trees had been planted. Now, some of this scrip was indorsed in pursuance of the Act of 1888, but it had to be exercised before the 31st December, 1890. With regard to the Ellesmere lands, the Act of 1888 provided that the scrip must be limited to £500 in value. Whether it was that the £500 was only to be allowed to the holder of scrip or to the transferee was a moot point. He thought it included a transferee; but the House would see that Mr. Murray exercised too much scrip. In the one instance he exercised £500 too much, and in the other some thousands of pounds too much. As to the second exercise of scrip, that was utterly void under the Act of 1888. That scrip could not be used in Canterbury at all, because it was used after the 31st December, 1890, and therefore it was utterly useless and was void as far as Canterbury was concerned. But the

Court of Appeal held that, though scrip would be void for other parts of the colony, yet a person did not lose his right to the scrip being exercisable in the provincial district of the colony where the trees had been planted. The honourable gentleman who had just spoken seemed to him not to understand the distinction. The fact of what appeared on the face of it did not make it legal scrip; it must be in pursuance of the Act of 1888, and the terms of the Act must be strictly complied with. As to some of the paragraphs reflecting upon the honourable gentleman and Mr. Whyte, he did not think they were in proper form. He voted against them in Committee, and therefore did not feel called upon to discuss them. This land-scrip was received in Canterbury for the purchase of Crown lands without any knowledge of or reference to the Minister of Lands in Wellington, who therefore had no control over the matter whatever. It had been received by the Receiver in Christchurch, disregarding the memorandum that had been sent by the honourable member for Maitara when he was Minister of Lands, issued by him in June, 1890: that order which he had given had been disregarded by the Receiver, or overlooked both by the Receiver and by the Commissioner of Lands. So that he did not think any one was to blame. It was an oversight of the office. He did not think that either the late or the present Minister of Lands was to blame. In that respect he did not think that paragraphs 6 and 9, especially, were accurate.

Mr. SEDDON did not think it would be right, in the case of a report brought down, the principal paragraph of which was carried unanimously, to allow it to be challenged in respect of the other paragraphs. There might have been some inconsistency as regarded paragraphs 6 and 9; but what did paragraph 6 say?—

"From the evidence of Mr. Whyte the Committee find that by a personal interview with Ministers in Wellington immediately after the sale of Ellesmere lands, on the 15th January, 1890, Mr. Whyte obtained irregular and illegal concessions from Ministers as to the use of his scrip in the payment of Ellesmere lands purchased by Mr. T. G. Murray in Christchurch, which gave illegal currency in Canterbury to a large quantity of scrip held or conditionally sold by Mr. Whyte."

On the Appropriation Bill last session he made a statement to the House that the late Minister of Lands, the honourable member for Maitara, in defiance of the law, in defiance of advice tendered, in defiance of the decision of the Appeal Court, had made a concession improperly; and the honourable gentleman challenged him to produce the papers. He said he would produce these papers, and leave the House to judge as between what he had stated and other statements that were altogether incorrect. Well, after a time had elapsed—during the recess—he questioned very much whether he would take any further steps whatever in regard to it; but they were brought face to face with this fact: that on the first or the second day of

the session the Auditor-General reported to the House the illegality that had taken place—that was, that a sum of money had been lost, and that illegal scrip had been exercised in respect of the purchase of this land. He indirectly brought up the whole question by referring to this surcharge which he had made, and which had been disallowed by the Minister of Lands. Then, there was nothing for them to do, in the face of that report from the Auditor-General, except to do what the Government had done—ask that the whole of this question as to the exercise of the scrip should be referred to the Public Accounts Committee; and the finding of the Public Accounts Committee as to the illegality was unanimous. There was no question whatever about that. This was very clear: that all amounts over £500 of the Auckland scrip, exercised by any one person in Canterbury, were illegally exercised; and he could not understand even now why the honourable gentleman persisted in his statement, notwithstanding the finding of the Court of Appeal, notwithstanding the advice that was tendered to him at the time, and notwithstanding that they had there conscientiously gone into the question, and were bound to find—it was impossible to find otherwise—that the Audit Department and everybody else were able to come to only one opinion. And yet the honourable gentleman evidently still adhered to the course that he took at the time. Then, there was this difference—and it was a material difference—as between the position of the honourable gentleman and that of his colleague the Minister of Lands: After the Hon. Mr. Whyte had purchased in Christchurch at the land sale he paid a deposit, and in his own evidence he admitted that he left the deposit, came to Wellington, and interviewed the honourable gentleman, and there got his consent to the exercise of his scrip illegally and over the £500.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said it was so. He only took it from the evidence of Mr. Whyte, and they must take the evidence as it was given. The honourable gentleman might have forgotten, but they had had conclusive evidence, with regard to paragraph 6, from the evidence of Mr. Whyte himself, that he had obtained irregular and illegal concessions from Ministers as to the use of his scrip in regard to the Ellesmere lands. Of course there was correspondence which showed this to be the case. There were telegrams from Wellington to Auckland, and from Auckland to Christchurch, and from Christchurch to Wellington. There was no doubt about that, and there was absolute proof of it; and there were the cheques given and held over, and which were lodged on account of the purchaser; and therefore it was impossible under the circumstances to say that such a concession had not been made. There was also this phase of the question: In paragraph 9 the report of the Committee put the matter very clearly, and showed that this scrip had been obtained in a semi-private manner. Any person knowing this to be the case, and knowing

Sir R. Stout

that the Minister had agreed to this being a private arrangement, must know that an undue advantage had been given over the general public; and those who held scrip, and who could have exercised it if this had been generally known, were prevented from doing so. Had it been generally known that the Government, irrespective of the law and of the decision of the Appeal Court, would allow the land-scrip to be exercised to the extent of its face-value, others could have exercised their scrip; and if the honourable gentleman had come to the House to have his action rectified, then, perhaps, it could not have been said, as it was now said in paragraph 9, that an injustice had been done to the public and to the Treasury. That was what was complained of, and, he thought, very properly so. The action of the officers, and other matters which had transpired since, had trammelled to a great extent the action of the Committee, and would have had an important bearing on the decision, because the officers did not obey the instructions which had been sent from the Head Office. These instructions had been overlooked, and the scrip was issued, irrespective of instructions to the contrary. But, with regard to subsequent instructions, he did not think the officers were to blame. From the commencement to the finish they must come to the conclusion that the scrip was only exercisable in the Auckland District to the extent of the full face-value, but in any other district only to the extent of £500. That it had been exercised to very much over that was proved by the schedule to this report; and then there was a fact which the honourable gentleman seemed to have overlooked, and that was that, as the honourable gentleman knew very well, there was an Act which provided that all moneys received for the sale of land at Ellesmere must be set apart. They were trust moneys in connection with the Ellesmere Trust, and any sale at Ellesmere was different from a sale in any other part of Canterbury or other portion of the colony. Therefore there were two illegalities: first, in the scrip being exercised to the extent of over £500; and, secondly, in taking land which the law said should only be sold for cash. That was beyond question, and he had introduced a Bill this session providing to take money from the consolidated revenue to replace the trust moneys for which scrip was taken for payment in regard to the Ellesmere lands. He had given the honourable gentleman an opportunity, in introducing that Bill, had he thought fit so to do, to challenge the report of the Auditor-General, or the action of the Government in providing by legislation, as they had to do, a remedy for the illegality which had taken place. Whatever doubts there might be with regard to the use of the scrip, there was no doubt whatever that the scrip could not be exercised in regard to the Ellesmere lands, because those lands were only to be sold for cash, and the proceeds placed to the credit of the trust fund. Then, the honourable gentleman endeavoured to bring in the late Prime Minister, Mr. Ballance. He did

not know why the honourable gentleman should have brought that gentleman's name in, or the course he had taken in respect of this matter, for it did not help the honourable gentleman's case one iota. No doubt it was true that the late Mr. Ballance gave notice for the scrip issued to be produced, and the Government might have been deluged with scrip, but that notice was simply to ascertain what scrip was outstanding, and that scrip could only be exercised as the law directed. The late Mr. Ballance did not say that he was going to legislate on the subject, or that he was going to allow this scrip to be exercised in an illegal manner.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the advertisement was not calling for the scrip issued, but for people to make their claims under their scrip.

Mr. SEDDON said, Very well; there was nothing improper in that. It was merely a matter of business that people should send in their claims to scrip under the Land Act; but did it follow that the Government should accept all claims, irrespective of the law for the time being, and say that the scrip should be exercised wherever the holders chose, and to the full face-value? He did not see that there was any connection at all between the two matters. He thought the honourable member for Inangahua had put the matter very clearly from the legal aspect of it, and he did not desire to say any more. All he wished to say was that an advantage had been given in the way stated in the report, and to an extent that he felt sure no private persons knew it could be exercised. If persons understood that scrip could be used in this way in defiance of the law, very serious evils might arise. He regretted very much what had occurred, and he thought the Committee, taking into consideration the facts they had had before them, had put the matter as temperately as possible. It might be a question in the case of Mr. Rhodes as to whether his claims should not be satisfied, seeing that he only used his scrip after going to a public officer for information, and if that officer made a mistake it ought to be taken as a sufficient excuse. The Committee came to the conclusion that it was so, and so far, therefore, there was no blame attached to Mr. Rhodes. As he had said, the surcharge by the Auditor-General was properly made; and, seeing the late Minister of Lands was to blame, the present Minister of Lands had weighed the thing well and waived the surcharge. And he hoped this sort of thing would not occur again.

Sir J. HALL would not have troubled the House had it not been that the Prime Minister had stated that the greater part of the report had been arrived at unanimously. The minutes of the proceedings of the Committee had been placed on the table, and honourable members could see for themselves that, as a matter of fact, it was not so. On the first four paragraphs they were unanimous, but on other portions there were numerous divisions.

Mr. SEDDON.—Unanimous on the general principle.

Sir J. HALL begged the honourable gentle-

man's pardon. The fact was this : that a sub-committee was appointed to draw up a draft report, and on the first four paragraphs of that report the Committee were unanimous, but to the other portions amendments were moved, which were many of them carried by a majority of one, in the absence of two members of the Committee who were known to take an opposite view of the question. He could make other reference to the manner in which the majority of one was obtained, but he would pass that over. The Minister stated that he would have let the matter drop if the Auditor-General had not raised the question; but, in justice to that officer, he would point out that he only did his statutory duty. The release of the surcharge was made by the Minister of Lands, and very properly; then it was the duty of the Auditor-General to bring the matter under the notice of the House, and in that respect the Auditor-General only did his duty. The Prime Minister blamed the honourable member for Mataura for persisting in an illegal construction of the law. Now, with regard to Mr. Rhodes's purchase, if Mr. Richardson's instructions had not been overlooked in Christchurch there would not have been any departure from the strict law. It was because the instructions issued in June, 1890, had been overlooked in Christchurch that to a limited extent the scrip held by Mr. Rhodes was used in excess of £500. With regard to the Ellesmere lands, the sum-total of the charge against the member for Mataura amounted to this: that he allowed scrip to be used in Canterbury which should not be used there to an extent of more than £500, but which could be used in the Province of Auckland to the full extent of what appeared on the face of it. The colony had not suffered to the extent of a single shilling, for if it had not been used in Canterbury it could have been used in Auckland. Then, there was another point. The Minister then alluded to paragraphs 9 and 6. Any one reading those two paragraphs would see that they were absolutely contradictory of each other.

Mr. TANNER.—No.

Sir J. HALL said the honourable member for Heathcote did not think so because they were partly his own concoction. Paragraph 9 said that persons tendering scrip had an unfair advantage over other competitors, because they knew that scrip would be accepted in payment for this land, while other persons did not know it. Paragraph 6, on the other hand, stated that it was only after the sale was over that Mr. Whyte came to Wellington, and, although first of all refused, he afterwards obtained leave for this scrip to be used. Therefore it was quite impossible that he could at the time of the sale have known that this scrip would be so used. The paragraphs contradicted each other. If Mr. Whyte had further knowledge than anybody else at the time of the sale that scrip would be accepted, why was it necessary, after the sale was over, for him to come to Wellington and obtain that concession?

Mr. TANNER.—Because the payment was not made at the time of the sale.

Sir J. Hall

Sir J. HALL said, Yes, the sale was over. That was all he wished to point out. The two paragraphs contradicted each other. As a matter of fact, it was only the first four paragraphs that were agreed to unanimously. Several of the others were agreed to by a majority of one, and they would not have been agreed to if two other members of the Committee had been present.

Mr. HOGG said they had had that afternoon some very interesting revelations with regard to the manner in which the law of the country was administered by the late Minister of Lands. The late Minister of Lands had been endeavouring to pose as a much-injured innocent. His own impression, after having heard the statements made to the House, was that the report was exceedingly mild. It had exonerated the officers of the department, but he thought it had only very righteously condemned the late Ministry, who were implicated in a most barefaced transaction. The question was a very simple one, and it was this: Was this scrip that had been referred to legally or illegally exercised? Apparently it was illegally exercised. The next question that arose was, Was it so exercised with the knowledge and assent of the Minister at the head of the department? And then came in another question, whether there was any collusion between Mr. Whyte and that Minister. It seemed that the evidence that the Committee had to deal with on that subject was simply overwhelming. The late Minister of Lands had been endeavouring that afternoon to rub the mud off his own fingers on to the present Minister of Lands; but there seemed to be a very great difference indeed between them. In the one case, the present Minister of Lands had no knowledge whatever of this transaction till it was brought before him through the action of the Audit Office; but in the other case it was asserted, and had not been contradicted, that the late Minister of Lands made an arrangement with Mr. Whyte by which that gentleman was allowed to exercise the scrip illegally; and, if that was the case, he could only say it was a most discreditable transaction, and one which deserved to be held up to the full light of day, and he thought credit was due to the honourable gentleman who had been the means of bringing this transaction to light.

Mr. WRIGHT could hardly allow the remarks of the last speaker to go unnoticed; otherwise he would not have risen. The honourable member insinuated that there was collusion between Mr. Whyte and the late Minister of Lands in reference to these scrip transactions. Now, anything more outrageous, he thought, had never been suggested. His experience was this: that those persons who were most prone to dishonesty and bribery themselves were always the first to raise suggestions in regard to others; and there were marked instances of it within the precincts of that House, which would no doubt be brought to light in due time. He might point out that the colony had not suffered any damage by these transactions. It

was true that the proceeds of the sale of the Ellesmere lands should have gone to the Ellesmere Trust; but, inasmuch as the Trust was in a state of bankruptcy, and owed the colony more than it could ever pay, the colony had not suffered damage to the extent of one penny by these transactions. The Little River Railway had been made upon the strength of these funds, and the Trust owed a very considerable sum on account of that railway, and the proceeds of the land would never cover it. Then, the scrip could have been exercised to its full face-value in Auckland. All that Mr. Whyte obtained by this irregularity—which was admitted—amounted to this: that he was able to dispose of the scrip which he had purchased with a little more promptitude than he otherwise might have done; that he was able to exercise it within a short period after the purchase of the scrip, and when, to have found land in Auckland on which to legitimately exercise the scrip, he might possibly have had to wait some months longer. That was the utmost profit that he could be said to have gained by exercising the scrip in Canterbury. A disparity existed between paragraphs 6 and 9. The two paragraphs of the original report which dealt with this matter—the report which was drawn up by a subcommittee of three—those original clauses were struck out by a majority of one on division in the Committee, and, apparently, with the sole object of introducing something that might be construed as damaging to the late Minister of Lands, in alleging that an advantage was obtained in a semi-private manner. No advantage whatever was obtained in a semi-private manner. When the Ellesmere sale took place Mr. Murray's cheque for the full amount was lodged in the Land Office. It was a cheque marked by the bank as good. It was after that cheque was lodged that Mr. Whyte negotiated with the late Minister of Lands to endeavour to get a concession that up to the last he had refused to give; and he was satisfied that it was not that honourable gentleman who gave way ultimately, but he was suffering because of his loyalty to some one else, who overruled his judgment in the matter, and authorised the acceptance of the scrip on these Lake Ellesmere lands. But for the honourable gentleman's strict sense of loyalty to a gentleman who had departed from this world, the blame—to whatever extent any such blame existed—would have been put on the right shoulders. The honourable member was in no way to blame, other than the blame that he had taken on himself which was due elsewhere, and because he technically, as head of the department, might be said to have had the principal responsibility in the matter. But the colony had suffered no damage, and there was nothing more in this matter than a malicious attempt to cast mud on political opponents.

Mr. GUINNESS thought that, as honourable members had not in their possession the evidence that came before the Public Accounts Committee in order to enable them to judge fully of this matter, it would be advisable to

move the adjournment of the debate until next day. Then honourable members would have time to see the evidence, and would be able to come to a conclusion as to whether or not the Committee's recommendation was correct. With that view, he would move the adjournment of the debate till next day. At the present time the debate was taking place a good deal in the dark. Only a few members—those on the Committee—were acquainted with the evidence and really had a grasp of the arguments *pro* and *con.*, or were able to come to a correct conclusion.

Mr. SPEAKER might point out that if the debate were adjourned the honourable gentleman would not gain his object—namely, the printing of the evidence—inasmuch as the order for the printing would not have been made.

Mr. GUINNESS thought that a special motion might be made, by leave of the House, for the printing of the evidence.

Mr. SPEAKER said the only way that could be done would be by withdrawing the motion, with the consent of the House, and then submitting a motion for the printing.

Mr. SEDDON said, of course, the evidence would be available for honourable members to see it.

Mr. SPEAKER said certainly.

Mr. TAYLOR did not see any reason why the debate should be adjourned. It had been said that the House had had no opportunity of discussing the report. He contended that the report had been read very carefully, and had been dealt with by the Premier, by the honourable member for Inangahua, and by honourable members all round. The discussion which they had had that day would, he thought, be an eye-opener to the public at large as to the way in which transactions of this kind had been carried on in the past. He did not wish to take up any time in dealing with the matter. He had practically placed upon record his view of the case, which view would be indorsed by the public at large.

Mr. RICHARDSON objected to the adjournment of the debate. It was a most unfair proposal; and the object of it was transparent. The report of the Committee had been read, and it was now going into *Hansard*. What the Government was endeavouring to prevent was that the evidence and the minutes of the Committee should be printed, and become public. They wished the report to go abroad without the evidence. If they did not, they would not oppose the original motion before the House. The motion for adjournment was simply to prevent the printing of the original evidence and the minutes.

Mr. GUINNESS rose to make a personal explanation. The honourable gentleman, by the remarks he had just made, would lead one to suppose that he considered that he (Mr. Guinness) had made a statement that was false, because he gave as a reason for moving the adjournment of the debate that he wanted the evidence to be printed and circulated.

Mr. SEDDON hoped the honourable member for Mataura would be more careful than to make statements like the one he had just made. He would consider himself to be doing that which was unfair, and which would be resented by members on both sides of the House, did he allow the papers, or anything connected with this matter, to remain in abeyance. It was his intention, if the motion for the adjournment of the debate were carried, to make this question again the first order of the day, so that honourable members might have the opportunity of deciding that the report should lie on the table along with the evidence and minutes, and that they should be printed. The only way it could be done was that which he now stated; and the question could come forward again. In a matter of so much importance as this, it would not be right for him, occupying the position he did in the House, to be a party to such a transaction as the honourable gentleman charged him with, and he resented the honourable gentleman's remarks, because to take up such a position as he had indicated would be a discredit to them in connection with the affair. He would not have touched so strongly on the matter if it had not been for the concluding statement of the honourable member for Ashburton, that this was a malicious attempt to cast mud on certain members of the Opposition. If the honourable gentleman applied this remark to himself (Mr. Seddon) or to the Government, he could tell him that he was quite mistaken. No one regretted more than he did that there had been a mistake,—and it should be allowed to remain in abeyance. That was the conclusion he had arrived at. That was one good reason why they should adjourn the debate. He might say, in regard to the paragraph which had been read out, which had been adverted to that day, and which had been dealt with in the debate, that it was advisable the debate should be adjourned, if only for the reason that the honourable member for Selwyn—who had moved in Committee in the matter—was that afternoon at home, not anticipating that what had eventuated would take place; and he might say that, had that honourable gentleman been in his place that day, he would have resented very strongly what had been said about this particular paragraph; and, at all events, members of the House now were not in a position to deal with the matter. They had never seen the evidence, and therefore they could not judge. They had heard what had been said by the honourable member for Ellesmere, they had heard what had been said by the honourable member for Mataura, and they had heard what he (Mr. Seddon) had said, but they were not in a position to come to a conclusion on the merits of the case until they had seen the evidence, and if the debate were adjourned the evidence could be printed, and would be at the disposal of honourable members to see for themselves before the debate was resumed.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. SEDDON said that was the case. Once the report was brought down—they had had

the ruling of the Speaker on that—it would be dealt with the same as any other paper. It was quite clear that it was then available to the House, and any member who desired to see the evidence could do so; and he, on behalf of the Government, undertook to see that the House would, say, next day, or Friday, whichever met the convenience of honourable members, be put in the same position as it was in to-day. He did not desire to take any advantage of the honourable member for Mataura, nor did he think the House would permit it. He did not think they were in a position to discuss the merits of the question until the evidence taken by the Committee had been seen by honourable members. He disagreed altogether with the statements made as to the evidence, and he knew it would be proved that what he said was correct. In the meantime he thought it would be as well to adjourn the debate.

Mr. FISHER was perfectly indifferent as to whether this matter was discussed again or not, but he would vote for the amendment of the honourable member for Mataura, for the reason that, notwithstanding the bland undertakings and the bland promises of the Premier as to what would be done if the debate were adjourned, the House might accept his fullest assurance that if it were adjourned they would never see the question again. There were some members of the House whose information on this subject was confined to what the Premier had said, and who had formed their opinions from what he had said. There were some members in that far-off corner of the House who had spoken on this matter as if they thought there was something dreadful to be brought to the light of day. There were some other members who, if the discussion did come up again,—and he did not believe it ever would,—would take care that they heard something as to the peculiar conduct of the Premier in regard to the proceedings of the Committee, and as to the way in which the business was conducted. He would take care, for one, if it did come up, to make honourable members a little more fully informed than they were at present, and he would come there much better prepared to discuss the question than he was at present. There were two sides to the question. There was not only the side of the question which the Premier wished to put to the House and the country, but there was another side as well. If the matter ever did come up again he would take care to contribute his quota to that other side.

Mr. SHERA would point out to the honourable member for Mataura that he was in error in stating that the report would find its way into *Hansard* because the Clerk read it out. Whatever the Clerk read in that way was not reported in *Hansard*.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE had to express his opinion that the scruples of the Premier were creditable to him—his desire to forward the printing of the document—and he hoped he would be equally scrupulous when another report from the same Committee came to be

tabled by-and-by. He hoped he would be; but he confessed that he could not see the logic of the Premier's position in expressing so very strong a desire that a certain document should be printed, and then deliberately opposing the motion for printing. That was the position the Premier took up at the present time.

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, no.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said that was nevertheless the position. The motion at the present time was that these documents do lie on the table, and that they be printed. Honourable members, therefore, in adjourning the debate, would certainly run a very considerable risk of not seeing these documents again, and of not having them printed. At the same time, there was a very simple way out of the difficulty if the Premier chose to adopt it. He confessed that he could not possibly see that the documents had come yet into the hands of the Clerk; because the motion was that they do lie on the table, and there was no intermediate stage for them until that motion was agreed to. If the motion was not carried, the documents, he presumed, would remain in the hands of the Chairman of the Committee.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON rose to a point of order. The honourable member was not speaking to the question of adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was speaking to the adjournment, and showing what would happen if it were carried.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said it was a curious way of speaking to the adjournment.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he was stopped the previous day in speaking to the adjournment; and he could not understand why, when he rose to speak on a question, everybody rose to rain down on him questions of order. He rarely raised questions of order against anybody else. He was suggesting that these documents, if the motion for the adjournment were carried, rested in the hands of the Chairman of the Committee, because they had not as yet been taken out of his hands.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE rose to a point of order. The report of the Committee had been read to the House, and was therefore before the House.

Mr. SPEAKER said the position was that, until the House had made an order that the papers do lie on the table, they were not, technically, on the table of the House.

Mr. SEDDON understood that the report had been read.

Mr. SPEAKER said it had been read, certainly, but it could not lie on the table until the motion to that effect was passed.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE asked, how could the documents be said to lie on the table now, if the motion that they do lie on the table was to be left undetermined until Friday next? If the Government were so extremely anxious to get the documents printed and then discussed, why not add an amendment to the present motion—that they do lie on the table and be printed—to the effect that the discussion on them be made an order for another day? Then the papers could be printed and distributed,

and there could be a discussion upon them later on if it was desired. He did not himself desire to take part in a discussion on them, nor did he suppose anybody else did, unless it were some of his honourable friends opposite, who had made some serious charges against other honourable members, which charges they had not substantiated. Was there any objection to the course he suggested? He would like to know if the Premier agreed; because he was disposed to believe that the honourable gentleman desired to do what he alleged he wished to do. He professed to desire that opportunity be offered to every member of the House to examine these documents for himself; and the only way in which they could be examined was to have them first printed and distributed. He therefore asked the Premier to support the motion for printing, and then make the discussion an order of the day for some other day.

Mr. SEDDON did not admit that he had any other motive in asking for the adjournment of the debate except that the consideration of the report should be brought on upon another day. He would ask the honourable member for the Grey to withdraw his motion for the adjournment.

Mr. GUINNESS asked leave to withdraw his motion for adjournment.

Motion for adjournment of the debate withdrawn.

On the question, That the report, together with the minutes and the evidence, do lie upon the table and be printed,

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, as an amendment, That the following words be added: "and that the report be taken into consideration to-morrow."

Mr. TANNER objected to any proposal for the adjournment of the question till the following day; for that would not afford sufficient time for seventy members of the House to examine the papers and inform themselves of the facts.

Mr. SEDDON said that, with the permission of his colleague, he would have "to-morrow" altered to "Friday."

Sir J. HALL asked what would be the effect so far as concerned those who had already spoken on the subject.

Mr. SPEAKER said they could speak to the amendment.

Sir J. HALL asked if he was to understand that those honourable members who had already spoken would have the opportunity between the present time and Friday to examine and consider the minutes, and then be allowed to speak again.

Mr. SPEAKER said, Yes.

Mr. HAMLIN asked if the question was that they should have the question under their consideration on Friday; or was it simply one of the ordinary modes of removing the question out of the immediate range of discussion, and relegating it to some other time which might never arrive? Could they discuss it on Friday or not?

Mr. SPEAKER said the position would be this: If the motion were carried, the question

would become an order of the day for Friday. That was all. If the House were to make it the first order of the day for Friday, then it would take precedence on that day.

Dr. NEWMAN hoped the Premier would fix a definite time for it to be taken, as if merely set down for Friday it might be postponed indefinitely.

Mr. SEDDON said he would let it take its course.

Mr. RHODES would be very sorry to see the thing shunted, as there had been certain charges over certain members of the House for the last two sessions.

Mr. GUINNESS thought the consideration of the matter could be easily taken the following day, as the whole evidence was already printed.

Mr. RICHARDSON said the honourable gentleman was not altogether correct. The evidence was printed, but the report of the proceedings had not been printed.

Amendment agreed to.

MAJOR KEDDELL.

Mr. HALL-JONES (on behalf of the member for Waimate) asked the Minister of Justice, Whether he has made any inquiry into a complaint made as to the conduct of Major Keddell, R.M., in relation to a case (*Mann v. Broughton*) heard recently at Waimate; and, if so, what is the result of such inquiry?

Mr. REEVES said the answer to the first part of the question was Yes. The answer to the second part was that the Government saw no reason for further inquiry, and were satisfied that there was no reason.

COLONEL FOX.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, What is the legal and official status of Colonel Fox, and what duties is he now performing?

Mr. SEDDON said the legal and official status of Colonel Fox was defined in the Defence Act, with which, no doubt, the honourable gentleman was conversant. His duties were also therein defined. The Commandant of the Forces was performing his duties to his (the Premier's) entire satisfaction.

MIDLAND RAILWAY.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, If he can say whether negotiations are pending between the Government and the Midland Railway Company for a settlement of those differences which are retarding the completion of a railway-line between Springfield and the West Coast?

Mr. SEDDON said the answer to the question was in the affirmative, and the whole question was referred to the Public Accounts Committee.

LYTTELTON UNEMPLOYED.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier, If he will represent to the Railway Commissioners that a great number of labouring-men, residents of Christchurch and its vicinity, are taken to Lyttelton every morning and employed there

on railway casual labour, whilst hundreds of Lyttelton labourers are out of work?

Mr. SEDDON said that some inquiries had been made as to where the Commissioners obtained their men, and the information given was that they got their men in the same way as the Union Steamship Company, who had some sort of establishment in Christchurch. He would say that a man out of employment living in Christchurch should not be placed at a disadvantage as compared with a man in Lyttelton, or *vice versa*. The district should be taken as a whole, and it would be manifestly unfair to say that any person who lived in a certain locality should have a pre-emptive right to the whole of the employment in that locality; because that would lead to confusion. At all events he would represent to the Commissioners what was set forth in the question, and they would probably be able to get an explicit reply.

WHAKATANE RIVER BRIDGE.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister of Lands,—(1.) If the erection of a bridge over the Whakatane River has been authorised? (2.) If the Government have received a petition from the Canterbury Association asking to have the said bridge constructed? (3.) Is the Government aware that the settlers belonging to the above Association, who have taken up a large area of swamp-land in the Bay of Plenty, are unable to get supplies to their homesteads for want of roads and the bridging of the above river?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said,—(1.) The erection of a bridge over the Whakatane River has not yet been authorised. (2.) The Government has received a petition from the North Island Land Association asking to have a bridge constructed across the Whakatane River. (3.) The Government has not been informed that the settlers belonging to the above Association are unable to get supplies to their homesteads for want of roads and the bridging of the river; and, as there are several other ways of getting supplies besides crossing the Whakatane River, it is unlikely that they can be in want for that reason alone.

MANAWATU RAILWAY COMPANY'S LANDS.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Minister of Lands, If he will adjust the claims of the Crown and the Manawatu Railway Company to certain lands in the Hutt County, so that they may be disposed of on settlement conditions? Scattered about in various parts of the Hutt County were certain lands which were Crown lands that had not been disposed of. The Manawatu Railway Company claimed that they were within fifteen miles of that railway. This claim had been pending for a number of years, and had not been settled. The lands—waste, and covered with scrub *et cetera*—were rather a nuisance to the neighbourhood, and were a bar to settlement. It would be well if the Government could manage to settle with the company as to whom these lands belonged to; and if they belonged to the Crown they could be put into

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the market, or if to the railway company they could be disposed of. He hoped some definite settlement would be arrived at.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the claim of the company was now under the consideration of the Government, and had been for some time. Some years ago the company had been offered a considerable area of land in settlement of their claim, but had declined the offer. If the honourable gentleman could show the Government how they could settle the matter they would be only too glad to have his assistance. But they found it very difficult to settle the claim. The Government were most anxious that it should be settled, and, if the company would make any reasonable offer, the Government would meet them fairly.

WAIKATO LANDLESS NATIVES.

Mr. TAIPUA asked the Minister in charge of Native Affairs, Whether Government intend to carry out the distinct promise made to the House last year that they would set apart land for landless Natives in Waikato and other places? Last year he had put a similar question to the Native Minister; and he would read the reply he received on that occasion:—

“Mr. CADMAN replied that it was the intention of the Government to make some provision for the landless Natives not only of Waikato, but throughout the whole colony, and the House would shortly be asked to pass legislation to that effect; and he would be glad of the co-operation of the honourable gentleman when the legislation appeared.”

Ever since he had asked the question he had been waiting to see what the Government intended to do in the matter.

Mr. CARROLL found that the promise alluded to in the question was made on the 29th of June last year. In the October following the Land Act was passed, and if the honourable gentleman would look at section 171 of that Act he would see that the Governor there was empowered to set apart land for special settlements for Natives exclusively. It was in that way the Government intended to give effect to their promise. The Government at the present time had no intention whatever of avoiding this responsibility, and during the recess they had been doing their best in the direction of providing land for Natives under a comprehensive scheme. He might say that during the recess the attention of the Government had been devoted to the position of the landless Natives of the South Island. They would pay attention in the immediate future to the case of Natives in the North Island.

EYRE AND ASHLEY RIVERS.

Mr. MOORE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether he will send some of the unemployed to clear the Rivers Eyre and Ashley, in the Canterbury District, of the gorse growing in these rivers, which has mainly been brought down from Crown lands on the adjacent hills, and if allowed to spread must be detrimental to the district? The Minister for

Public Works was probably aware that a considerable amount of distress prevailed in Christchurch and the surrounding districts owing mainly to the want of employment. There were, practically speaking, no public works now being carried on in the Canterbury District, and the work mentioned in his question might, he thought, to a great extent be looked upon as a public work; and, if the Minister could see his way to have it carried out, it would be a very great benefit to the district, and would at the same time give some employment to the people in the district who were now out of employment. He thought it was a work which the Government might well undertake. If this growth were allowed to continue for any length of time the probability was, in the event of those two rivers overflowing, that the gorse would be carried broadcast over a large area of country.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had laid down from the very commencement that they would only place co-operative men, or unemployed men, on reproductive works, and in this case he would ask the honourable member to direct the attention of the local authorities to this matter. The rivers in most districts of Canterbury had been declared to be highways. Some of the local bodies there were well-to-do, and, if they would only come to the rescue of the Government and assist to find employment in this class of work, the Government would be only too well pleased to accept their assistance.

Mr. MOORE asked if the Government would be willing to assist by giving pound for pound.

Mr. SEDDON was afraid the honourable gentleman had better place that question on the Order Paper.

LIBEL BILL.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Premier, Does he propose to press forward the Libel Bill, so that it may be passed into law this session? He saw the Bill was very far down on the Order Paper, and he would like to have some assurance from the Minister that the Bill would be proceeded with this session.

Mr. SEDDON said, if the members on both sides of the House would only help the Government to press forward the business, so that they might get some of the Bills passed, there would be a very good chance indeed of this Bill being pressed forward.

Mr. FISHER had a word or two to say on this Bill, and, to enable him to do so, he would move the adjournment of the House. He was very anxious that this Bill should be brought on for consideration, for during the recess he sent to one of the Wellington papers a letter on the subject of “Libel and Libellers,” in which he undertook, on the second reading of the Libel Bill, to give the history and character of the meanest, the foulest, the most cowardly libeller in this city—a fellow named Gillon—

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. FISHER would read from his letter what he had said about him:—

"Of him I have only to say that I regard him as a much-favoured man, to have a whole paper at his command in which to spit his venomous spite, and to receive a salary into the bargain for doing it. I could only ask for one great favour, and that would be to get him once fairly out into the open. This is the man who asks for the passing of a new Libel Bill. On the second reading of that Bill, if that time ever comes, I will faithfully delineate this man's character. It will form a companion picture to Sir William Fox's description of him."

Mr. SEDDON said, as a point of order—

Mr. SPEAKER asked what was the point of order.

Mr. SEDDON said his point of order was as to whether a member could exercise his privilege in applying terms like these to a respectable citizen or journalist in the colony. Was it in order that it could be done?

Mr. SPEAKER said he was afraid there was nothing in parliamentary law which enabled the Speaker to prevent it.

Mr. REEVES asked if he might recall a case in which Mr. Speaker's predecessor checked again and again a late member of the House—he thought, Mr. Dargaville—for referring to newspaper correspondents in language which for violent character failed to compare with this.

Mr. SPEAKER said all he could say was that, though his opinion certainly was that the language which was used towards persons who were outside Parliament should be governed as much as possible by similar rules to those in force with regard to members themselves—that was to say, that they should speak of such persons in a kindly and gentlemanly way—yet so far as regarded strict parliamentary law he did not think he was able to protect persons outside the walls of that building.

Mr. FISHER said the Premier spoke of "respectable" persons being affected. If this were a respectable person he would require no such protection. There were three cases which he intended to put on record when the second reading of the Bill came on. There was the case of Dr. Skae, the first Inspector of Lunatic Asylums, a high-principled, highly sensitive and nervous man. This poor man was hurried to his grave by the brutal and incessant attacks of this fellow. Then, there was the case of Mr. Hardcastle, a most upright Judge, the best Magistrate they ever had in that city. This poor man was hurried to his grave by the brutal and incessant attacks of this fellow. Then, the case of Colonel Reader, Colonel of a lancer regiment, Under-Secretary of Defence, a man who suffered painfully during the last two years of his life from heart-disease. This poor man was hurried to his grave by the brutal and incessant attacks of this fellow. He (Mr. Fisher) had to put on record many things about this fellow, because if he were a respectable man there would be no necessity for him to attend in his place that day to speak of him in the terms he spoke of him. If it were possible to get into these

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newspapers—he referred to two of them—any reply or answer to the attacks that appeared throughout the course of the year, it would not be necessary to say one word of what he was saying now. But what was the course adopted by this fellow? There was no possibility of answering his attacks. Throughout the year here they were slandered day by day, and no answer was allowed to appear—a state of journalism unheard-of—and the only chance they had of meeting this fellow was during the sitting of Parliament, and on the floor of that House. He was not going to be barred by any statement of the Premier that this was a respectable man. It was a misuse of the word to call him a man. Let the honourable gentleman bring on his Bill, and he would undertake—as he said in the letter he read there—to put on record in regard to this fellow a companion picture to the description given of him a quarter of a century ago on the floor of that House by Sir William Fox.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON seconded the motion for adjournment in order simply to say that an adjournment was more than he bargained for. At the same time he was bound to say that, barring the very hard words of the honourable gentleman who moved the adjournment, this newspaper to which the honourable gentleman referred must be considered nothing short of a disgrace to the City of Wellington, and he did wonder that the large and respectable population of Wellington continued year after year to tolerate such a newspaper in their midst. He knew it did injury to a city he had ever wished to see prosper, and largely populated by all sorts and conditions of people; and he could not help saying, though he should not like to use the words the honourable gentleman had used, that the editor of that newspaper and the way it was conducted were really a very pitiable thing for journalism in this colony. He took an opportunity of indicating this opinion on a previous occasion, and he could not fail to reiterate it again. But he wished to say, further, that the Libel Bill had really nothing to do with this person, and the law would remain even more clear than now for the prosecution of libel. As far as he understood it, this Bill would only make it more easy to prosecute the libeller. The honourable member, like himself, did not think it worth while to prosecute him. He (Mr. Hutchison) could have made a fortune once a month through actions for libel when he was a resident of Wellington, in actions against that very newspaper. He held with the blacksmith who said he could carve out a character for himself in half an hour at the anvil far better than if he went into any number of actions for libel.

Mr. C. H. MILLS said that, as the adjournment of the House had been moved that afternoon, and as it would preclude his moving the adjournment on the question he had on the Order Paper, he intended to take advantage of the present motion for adjournment—which he had never done before since he was a member of that Parliament—to refer to a matter

which he considered of far greater importance than many matters discussed in that chamber. He had a question on the Order Paper referring to a Court of Criminal Appeal, which he intended now to refer to, and his reason for doing so was this: that during the last session of Parliament a petition was presented to a Committee over which he presided, and after a long investigation a report was brought forward in reference to that petition, which referred to a man now a convict—a man named Chemis—and he should give some reasons why he believed what he had publicly expressed then, that Chemis was innocent of the crime; and he intended to make the same statement again.

Mr. HAMLIN rose to a point of order. Had the honourable gentleman a right to speak to a question of his own on the Order Paper two or three questions down?

Mr. SPEAKER said no honourable gentleman would be entitled to speak to the question of a Court of Criminal Appeal in anticipation of the motion on that subject which was on the Order Paper; but the honourable member could speak to the case he now referred to.

Mr. C. H. MILLS thanked Mr. Speaker for that decision; and he said fearlessly that if any honourable member considered the matter of less importance than, or not equal importance to, those discussed day after day, his best course would be to go to the lobbies and remain there until he (Mr. Mills) finished, for he had the floor of the House, and intended to keep it.

Mr. HAMLIN asked if this was a defiance of Mr. Speaker's ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER did not understand the honourable gentleman to defy his ruling. He had told the honourable gentleman he was not to refer to the proposal for the establishment of a Court of Criminal Appeal on this motion for adjournment, and he did not understand that he proposed to do so.

Mr. SEDDON should say it was an invitation to the honourable member for Franklin to go into the lobby.

Mr. HAMLIN said he did not intend to go there. He had a right to sit in the House, and would sit there.

Mr. MOORE thought they ought to have the Speaker's ruling on the question whether an honourable gentleman could challenge another to go into the lobby.

Mr. REEVES said it was an invitation to the honourable member for Franklin to step outside. They knew what that meant.

Mr. HAMLIN said that if he could understand that he was wanted to step out for a certain purpose he should be most happy to accommodate the honourable gentleman; aye, the two of them together if they liked.

Mr. C. H. MILLS said the matter he was referring to he would endeavour to summarise as much as possible; but he had no doubt there were many in that House who had not heard the facts to which he intended to allude. The position was this: that some three years ago a man named Hawkins was found murdered not

far from the City of Wellington, and it was a most horrible murder, for he was shot in two places, besides being stabbed twenty-one times. A man named Chemis, who had been residing near the same place for fourteen years, and had been always working for one employer, was accused of the murder. He was tried and found guilty; but directly after a large number of persons in the city and round about the suburbs signed a petition voluntarily, quickly, and most earnestly, to have this man pardoned. The matter was thoroughly and fully discussed by the Cabinet then in power, and the result was that the sentence was commuted; and so far the prisoner had remained in gaol. When a petition was presented to the House last session it was inquired into, and some honourable members passed very strong reflections on Committees of the House, comparing them unfavourably with common juries; and it was asked whether they should give their time and attention to such matters—whether they had any right to do so, and whether they should not pass it over and treat the petition with silence. In his opinion, there was nothing more important in this country, or in any other, than a man's liberty. The logical conclusion in the minds of the members of the Committee was, that either the evidence was sufficient to prove that this man was guilty of the crime, and he should have been hanged without delay, or he should have been acquitted on the ground of insufficient evidence. He would now refer to what took place about three years ago with regard to a common jury, as showing why he thought a Select Committee of that House was equal, if not superior, to a common jury. He was called as a witness some three years ago in Wellington. To the best of his recollection there were thirteen cases on the calendar, and, of these, he thought the prisoners were acquitted in twelve cases, and one conviction was established,—and why? Because the man confessed his guilt. He asked a juryman afterwards how it was, when such direct evidence had been produced in one case, that he could not convict the man; and the juryman asked, "Do you think I am going to convict anybody on four bob a day?" Therefore he contended that a Select Committee of the House was superior to a common jury in that respect: and he held that this petition had been properly dealt with. To back up his opinion, he would read an extract from one of the leading journals in Wellington, written when this murder was recorded. He would quote from the *Evening Post* of the 16th July, 1889:—

"Intense astonishment is the prevailing feeling with which the verdict of the jury in the Kaiwara murder case has been received by the public. It was entirely unexpected, for, although a general impression has prevailed that Chemis was really the perpetrator of the crime, very few thought that any twelve men would, on the evidence, return a verdict of Guilty. The evidence was purely circumstantial, and the chain of circumstances had some very weak links indeed. Amongst the weakest was the one forged by the police, connecting

the pieces of paper found in the wound in Hawkins's body with the others alleged to be found in Chemis's house. To those who, outside the jury-box, followed the evidence most closely, it certainly appeared that here there was a most fatal flaw in the welding. Were the pieces of paper which fitted in with those taken from the wound actually found in the possession of Chemis, or might it not have been possible that they were really found near where the murder was committed? In the latter case there would be nothing to connect Chemis with the crime. The police seem to have dealt with the various pieces of paper in a very careless and rude way. Each piece as it was found should have been carefully marked for identification, the exact spot where it was found noted, and the greatest precautions should have been adopted in regard to their subsequent custody until produced in Court. Instead of this, some were bundled into a handkerchief, without note or sign by which they could be identified or the place they came from determined, others were sorted into envelopes, and all were carried about in pockets, locked up in presses, passed from hand to hand, or generally dealt with in such a manner as to render it impossible to follow their history with any absolute certainty, and to throw considerable doubt on their identity. Thus what might have formed the very strongest evidence was greatly weakened in its force and involved in not unreasonable doubt: yet this was the most important, in fact, almost the only evidence to directly connect Chemis with the murder. No one would have been surprised if the jury had given the prisoner the benefit of the doubt arising from the negligence of the police in regard to the identification and custody of these pieces of paper: in fact, every one expected that they would do so. We regret having to write severely of the action of the police, but public duty leaves us no alternative. If the real criminal has been brought to justice, they do not deserve any credit; whereas, if the wrong man has by any chance been convicted, a most terrible responsibility rests upon them. . . . The extraordinary delays which took place on all hands, however, combined to render it impossible to do more than establish a weak circumstantial case. . . . Fortunately the whole case will have to undergo the careful revision of the Executive Council and His Excellency the Governor, and if, on impartial review, they see any element of doubt as to the convict's guilt, any serious flaw in the chain of circumstances against him, or any reasonable explanation of the facts consistent with his innocence, we may rest assured that the capital sentence will be commuted, so that, if any error has been committed, its future rectification may not be rendered absolutely impossible should further evidence be forthcoming either directly bearing on the action of Chemis in the matter, or implicating some one else as the author of the crime."

That was what appeared in one journal which was well known in the City of Wellington; and there was another. The *Catholic Times*, a jour-

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nal of some note, published a leader in its issue of the 19th of July, 1889; and, as the liberty or bondage of a doomed man was yet hanging in the balance, he would give extracts from that animated and persuasive open letter to the Governor on that date. Referring to the petition for the commutation of the death sentence on Louis Chemis, the writer stated,—

"A large number of the people of Wellington, it is probable the whole colony, are about to implore you to practise that grandest attribute of power of which the great Shakespeare has written, 'We plead now for mercy.' The history of this man for many years proves that he has been a loyal and estimable citizen, a good father, an honest helpful neighbour, and a true man. He has saved life at the risk of his own. Let his good qualities, let the lives he has saved, plead for his own life. Charles Bunny, that far-seeing and truthful advocate, that heroic lawyer who rose from his death-bed to defend Chemis, declared almost in the last words we heard him utter his unalterable belief in the innocence of Louis Chemis. The evidence against Chemis was not only circumstantial, but of the narrowest, most confused, and obscure type. The prisoner was convicted on that portion of the testimony which related to some pieces of paper. We will not insult your intelligence, not as a Governor of this colony but as a man of the world, by attempting any criticism of the paper 'proof,' feeling sure that on such 'proof' you could not permit a dog to be hanged. Every jurisprudent of eminence has recorded an equal solemn protest against convicting when the evidence against the accused is police evidence, unsupported, or only meagrely supported, by the testimony of those unconnected with the police. The person who can conscientiously say that no doubt exists in this case must be totally incapable of appraising or estimating the value of evidence. Your Excellency knows there is a doubt, a most grave doubt, not only in the minds of the multitude, but in the minds of many lawyers and laymen of the highest education and keenest intelligence. Many perfectly innocent men may be totally unable to prove their innocence—Louis Chemis may be in that position. We add the expression of our fervent hopes that the Omniscient will aid and guide your deliberations, and that you will not for one moment forget that a man's life is at stake, and that there is doubt concerning his guilt."

No other construction could be placed on this appeal to the Governor than that the journalist who wrote these words was convinced of the innocence of this man. It was an appeal to the Governor to look into this case and render, so far as he could, justice to this prisoner. And what did Lord Onslow, who was then Governor, do? He walked over the ground himself,—as members of the Committee had since done,—timed himself, and made further inquiries, and found that it would have required a succession of little miracles for that man to have perpetrated the murder—any one who sifted the evidence would see that what he said was correct—and the result was that

when the matter went before the Cabinet they commuted the sentence. And once that was done it was made evident that there had not been sufficient evidence to hang the man. Any one who realised the horrible nature of the murder must feel that, if the evidence had been sufficient, nothing could or should have saved the man from the gallows if he was guilty. When the matter came before the Committee they found that some of the strongest evidence brought before the jury had no weight with them. There was this fact: that the stiletto which was found in the man's house was taken by the doctor and placed in the wound before it had been submitted to any analysis. If that had not been done this weapon might have been strong evidence in favour of the man, because it could have been proved that it had not had any blood on it for some time before. There was one point which was most conclusive with the Committee as far as regarded this weapon, and it was shown in this way: When the police brought the clothes of the murdered man away they did not show very great care in having those clothes looked after. In the bottom of the box in which the clothes were there was a paper collar in which there was a slit where a weapon had been stabbed through, and, as the doctor had said, the only place of a deep wound in the body was the neck. That was clearly shown, and, if the shape of the cut had exactly fitted the weapon, then there would have been little doubt that the weapon had caused the death of the murdered man. The Committee had this weapon stabbed through the collar in another part, and what was the result? It was clear and conclusive to the Committee that that weapon was not the weapon used. It could not possibly have been used, because it was in shape an inverted diamond; whereas the other hole in the collar was just the same slit as a butcher's knife would make. The evidence given to the Committee also showed this: that the gun was a double-barrelled one—not a breach-loader, but a muzzle-loader; that it was only fired out of one barrel, whereas the victim had received two shots—one struck him on the pocket and glanced off a knife there, and the other charge was fired in his back under the shoulder. But the doctor stated in his evidence that the man could have run for twenty miles after the shot, and that the shot would not have killed him. It was the stabbing which killed him. Other strong evidence was shown to the Committee. It was proved that Chemis had the same clothes on when the police first went to his house as he had been working in the day previously, and yet they could find no blood on them, although he was supposed to have stabbed a man twenty-one times in the dark. Honourable members would recollect that on the 31st May it was dark at five o'clock, and the murder was committed about half-past five or twenty minutes to six; and yet, marvellous to relate! there was not one spot of blood on Chemis's clothes or anywhere about him. To the mind of the Committee that was very strong

evidence in his favour. There was another thing that was also shown very clearly, and that was that Chemis had for thirteen years proved himself a straightforward, honest man, and of anything but a quarrelsome nature. He had always been known as a very pleasant, even amiable, neighbour to those round about him. Then, within three months of the hearing of the case the Government brought in "The Criminal Evidence Act, 1889," which enabled a man's wife to give evidence. If the wife had been able to give evidence in this case the result might have been very different. And if it had not been made lawful for a wife to give evidence, he maintained that every one would have had to keep somebody always at home to prove an *alibi*; if a wife or child could not prove it, then a man must keep a stranger in the house to give evidence of an *alibi*. The evidence given afterwards by Chemis's wife and child was as strong as it could possibly be, and it bore out the fact that he had reached home shortly after five o'clock that particular night, and had never left it. He (Mr. C. H. Mills) had walked from Chemis's house to the scene of the murder, and he had made all allowance for a man travelling over the hill much quicker than he could do it, and it was conclusive that, unless Mr. Dimant had happened to meet Hawkins that particular night and stopped him talking for ten minutes, it would have been impossible for Chemis to have committed the murder within the time. But the fact of Dimant meeting Hawkins and chatting with him for about ten minutes just gave sufficient time for Chemis to have got over the hill and committed this deed. But everything went to show that the man never left his house. The real evidence was that of the piece of newspaper found in his house and that found in the wound. But what was that worth? Only the other day, when travelling from Blenheim to Havelock, he was talking to a gentleman in regard to this evidence, and this gentleman said that he had got a piece of a Blenheim newspaper in his pocket; that he had torn half of the paper off in the billiard-room of a hotel, leaving the rest; and he said if a man were killed at that place, and it were shown that he was the last person who was seen talking to the murdered man, the part of the torn paper left at the hotel might be brought as evidence against him. It showed that an accident of that kind might occur so simply, when, at the same time, it might be clear to any one that the party charged with the murder had had nothing to do with it. Then, Chemis had a stiletto and a revolver in his possession, and if he wished to commit a murder there was no need for him to have loaded a gun and carried it over the hill. Both the Crown Prosecutor and the surgeon admitted to the Committee that the stiletto was only make-weight evidence. But it was strong make-weight evidence at that particular time—in fact, it almost carried conviction with the jury, because the accused was a foreigner, and foreigners were the class who generally used

stiletto. The jury were told that a stiletto was found in his possession, and that it fitted the wound exactly in size and shape; and no doubt that did carry conviction with the jury at that particular time. Then, it was shown clearly that Chemis had been using wads for six weeks previously, whereas paper had been used when the shots were fired; and the shot used was of a different size from that found in his pouch. That was strong evidence in Chemis's favour. There was a great deal of talk about the motive. He did not intend to go outside what the Judge himself said in reference to that. The Judge said, when summing up at the trial, "The fact that no motive had been proved would be a circumstance in favour of the prisoner." Then, he went on further to say,—

"The question for them to consider was, Were they satisfied beyond all reasonable doubt that the prisoner committed the crime? Probably they would find many facts consistent with his guilt, and many facts consistent with his innocence, and if that should be the case they could not convict him. . . . The principal fact against the prisoner was that pieces of the *Post* of the 23rd of May were found in the wound and on the ground, and that afterwards pieces fitting to them were found in prisoner's house, and from that it was said they must infer that the pieces were found in his possession. There may be some error, and it was for them to say, after examining the evidence, whether or not there was any error. Of course, he pointed out, if there had only been the pieces found on the ground, and the corresponding pieces in the wound, that would not connect the prisoner with the crime. It was necessary to pay great attention to the evidence of the constables, upon whose evidence the finding of the papers stood. It was necessary to see beyond all reasonable doubt whether the evidence was convicting and satisfactory, and left no room for doubt; for, although they may have said that the paper was found in the house,—and no doubt they believed it,—there might have been some mistake. His Honour referred to the evidence of the several officers engaged in the search at the ground and the prisoner's home, and he said it would be for them to say whether Inspector Thompson had possibly allowed the pieces of paper to get mixed, and that the papers he had found on the ground and placed in an envelope marked 'Gorse' could not have been mistaken for those found in the house. . . . It might be that the jury had heard some rumours of ill-feeling between the prisoner and Hawkings. He need not tell them that any such rumours should not affect them in the slightest way. If there was any ill-feeling between the two men it ought to have been proved. If there was any real foundation that there was ill-feeling—so much so that Hawkings was afraid—one could hardly doubt that some proper evidence of it ought to have been adduced. . . . In order to convict the prisoner, they must bring themselves to a conclusion without any reasonable doubt. If any, however, had

any doubt they must give the prisoner the benefit of it."

That was the summing-up of the Judge at the trial, and he claimed that it was entirely in favour of the prisoner. He felt that what concerned a man's liberty was such a grave matter that he would not for anything allow the session to pass over without bringing the matter before the House, because he considered, having once come to the conclusion that this man was really the victim of a great miscarriage of justice, the more he could bring the matter forward, and the more he could call attention to it, the better chance there was for the poor fellow to get justice in the end. Even though he was a foreigner, that should not weigh against Chemis. He (Mr. Mills) had read only the other day of a foreigner in Auckland who had saved six lives in this colony, and who was presented with a medal for his bravery. He did not think it right that there should be any feeling against a man because of his nationality: in fact, as Englishmen they ought rather to give greater consideration to him, because these men were certainly at a disadvantage when charges were brought against them. It was for that reason that he had ventilated this matter, and because he knew of no other way in which he could do this person any good. He knew that they could only appeal to such a tribunal as this, for they were the guardians of the people's rights and privileges; and if the Government eventually decided to constitute a Court of Criminal Appeal, then he should, at any rate, have taken one step towards bringing that reform upon the statute-book. He felt—and he knew there were a great number of other people just in the same position—he honestly believed that a great miscarriage of justice had occurred in connection with this case. He did not wish to traverse the decision of the Supreme Court, and it might be remembered that he had stated so when bringing down the report of the Committee last year; and the leader of the Opposition then complimented him, when that report was presented, because he (Mr. Mills) stated that he did not wish to impugn in any way the decision of the Court. Any one who said that the Committee had impugned that decision in trying the matter as the Committee had done took up a position that he had no right to occupy. So far as his understanding could guide him in regard to the case of this man, he would say this: The logical conclusion was that Chemis must either be guilty or innocent of the crime charged against him. If the Crown could prove him to be guilty of such a murder as was laid to his charge, then he should be hung without the slightest compunction. But, on the other hand, if he was an innocent man, then he (Mr. Mills) said that the Crown should have given him his freedom: he ought to have his freedom unless he could be proved guilty. Some asked, Who was the one who committed the murder? That had nothing to do with him. He was not there to prove the guilt of any one else, and he

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did not believe for one moment a member of Parliament could be expected to do so. All the Committee, had to do was to make inquiry into the evidence, and report to the House; and, that having been done, he hoped something would before long be done to carry out the recommendation of the Committee, and let the country clearly understand what was the position. He believed this man should be liberated. No chain was stronger than its weakest link. They all acknowledged that; and the links in this chain of evidence were so weak that there was no reasonable man who went through it but would come to the same conclusion as the Committee had come to. And, finally, he earnestly trusted the Executive would give to an innocent man what our forefathers fought so hard and even died for—the blessing of liberty.

Mr. FISH said the honourable gentleman who had just resumed his seat was, in his opinion, to be highly congratulated upon the manner in which he had introduced this question to the House. He did not think there was anything left to tell. It must be evident that the honourable gentleman was sincere in his convictions upon this matter, and that he really believed a wrong had been done to an unfortunate man who was wrongly in prison. He (Mr. Fish) could only say that at the time of the conviction he, in common—he thought he was justified in saying—with the large majority of the people of Wellington, had a strong conviction that the verdict of the jury was not warranted by the evidence. This case had since then been brought up before the Committee of which the honourable member for Waimea-Picton was Chairman, and he knew it had received from that Committee the most careful and patient consideration, and the result of that patient consideration was contained in the somewhat warm appeal the honourable gentleman had made that afternoon for justice to this man. At all events, as the honourable member had said, this man was either innocent or he was guilty. If he was guilty he should have been hanged. If there was a doubt in the mind of the Government of the day sufficient to induce them to commute the death penalty to one of imprisonment for life, he thought the time had come when the Government should reconsider their decision, with the view of allowing this unfortunate man to obtain his liberty. He ought not to be imprisoned for life under the circumstances, and yet that was what the sentence had been commuted to. The honourable gentleman had distinctly shown them that the position of the matter was such as to justify the Government in taking the case up again for careful consideration; and if they saw that the verdict was not warranted by the evidence they should show to the prisoner the further clemency of the Crown. He could add nothing to what the honourable gentleman had said, and had said so very well. He did not think the honourable gentleman could be accused of speaking in a partisan spirit. He thought he had made out a sufficient case to justify the

Government in giving the case fresh consideration.

Sir R. STOUT did not agree with the last speaker. He had read the evidence given at the trial, and especially had he read the evidence that came out when the charge of perjury was preferred, and he said that any person who read the evidence in the second case—that was to say, when the charge of perjury was preferred—could come to no other conclusion than that it was more than ample evidence for the verdict which the jury found. It seemed to him to be utterly useless to bring up this question on a motion for the adjournment of the House. If there was any other way of having the matter discussed it could surely be found, instead of the matter being brought up on a motion for the adjournment of the House. He had carefully read the evidence, and also the proceedings of the Committee, and he said that any person who went through it impartially, not biased one way or the other, must come to the conclusion that the man had been properly convicted. He regretted exceedingly that the forms of the House allowed members to attack persons outside the House as they had been attacked that afternoon. He had often been, as he thought, unjustly criticized by newspapers, and unjustly criticized by the *Post*; but surely it was not fair, it was not English, and it was not manly to attack a man in the way Mr. Gillon had been attacked that day, and to put those attacks in *Hansard*, when he had no opportunity of reply and could have none. He had known Mr. Gillon in various positions for a great number of years—in fact, almost from the time that he (Sir R. Stout) first came to the colony; and, although he might be very violent, perhaps, in expression of his likes and dislikes, he did not know anything he had done which warranted the remarks that had been made about him that afternoon. Even were it so, he did not think it was proper for the forms of the House to be used so as to allow of such proceedings taking place as they had had that afternoon. Surely they should not allow *Hansard* to be abused in that way—as a vehicle for the outpourings of such strong feelings as they had listened to in that House; and he really thought, if their Standing Orders did not enable them to stop that state of things, some change ought to be made that would prohibit such things going forth into *Hansard* as they had had in the House that afternoon. He did not think it was fair or manly, and it seemed to him to be prostituting the position of the House, to use *Hansard* for such a purpose. He would not now remark upon the Libel Bill—that would be discussed when the Bill came before the House, and properly discussed; but he hoped the Government would press on their business. That afternoon had been entirely wasted, in the same way as many others had been during that session. He had protested against it from the first, and he said now, as he had said before, that they could not expect to do the work of Parliament in a proper manner if they were only to reach it after twelve o'clock

at night. They saw afternoon after afternoon wasted, and yet, knowing this terrible waste of time was going on, they were expected to do their work perhaps at one o'clock in the morning. It showed the necessity of their Standing Orders being amended in such a way as to prevent this terrible waste of time.

Mr. HOGG was exceedingly sorry to know that the hour was so advanced, and that he should not be given another opportunity of discussing this question. He was absolutely astonished at the opinions expressed by the honourable member for Inangahua. For his own part, he did not think the time devoted to the discussion of this question that afternoon had been wasted. They had before them the case of a man who had been languishing during the past three or four years in prison, whose wife was practically a widow, and whose family were practically orphans; and he said this: that any discussion of this character which might have the effect of restoring this man to liberty, to his wife and family, and to every one connected with him, was not time wasted at all, but time very well applied. He had read the evidence, and he had read it originally from beginning to end, and he came to an entirely different conclusion from that arrived at by the honourable member for Inangahua, because, in his opinion, it pointed conclusively to the fact that the man, so far from being guilty of the crime imputed to him, was absolutely innocent. This was the opinion he had held from the first, and it was the opinion he held now: and he said that, if the facts of that man's case were brought before any Parliament in the world, and fairly represented, instead of being tried as it originally was before a common jury composed of young and inexperienced men, any competent tribunal would have returned an entirely different verdict. In treating of this question, he would like to know what kind of justice the prisoners arraigned for criminal offences really received from the tribunals before which they were brought. The whole wealth of the country was brought to bear against them, the whole machinery of the criminal law was brought into operation. Paid Crown Prosecutors, trained to their work, and determined to sacrifice the lives or liberties of the accused, were employed. Evidence from every part of the country that could by any possibility convict them was brought to bear against them. They had no opportunity at all. The scales of justice were not evenly balanced, and no honourable member knew it better than the honourable member for Inangahua. With regard to the Chemis case, he would not say another word as to the man's guilt or innocence, but he would like to know whether he had received a fair trial, whether the scales of justice had been evenly balanced, whether, in fact, the scales of justice could be more unevenly balanced than they were in the case of that unfortunate man. On the one side they had the Crown, the engines of the law, the detectives and Inspectors of Police, witnesses brought from every quarter, and scientific experts, all brought to bear against this

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unfortunate man. They had also a prejudiced public opinion, for the fact that a man had fallen a victim to a most deplorable and cruel murder heated up the public blood to an intense point. They had all that to consider, and he asked whether, under the circumstances, the accused man had received a fair trial. He was known to be a respectable colonist. He had been working for twelve years for the Hutt County Council, but at the trial he was a friendless man. He had maintained his wife and family well, and he was peaceable; he owed no man aught, he was a member of the Foresters, and, for a working-man, he was in very comfortable circumstances indeed. At all events, it was proved at the trial that he had not the slightest motive for perpetrating a crime like this; and he (Mr. Mills) would say that any one who went over the case link by link would find that a more rotten case was never set up on evidence before.

The hour of half-past five having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Interpretation.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words "The Licensing Act, 1881," in the third line, be struck out, with the view of inserting "this Act."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 13.

Bruce	Mills, J.	Wilson.
Fergus	Mitchelson	
Hamlin	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Stout	Earnshaw
Joyce	Taipua	Harkness.

NOES, 53.

Blake	Kelly, J.	Richardson
Buchanan	Kelly, W.	Russell
Buckland	Lake	Sandford
Cadman	Lawry	Seddon
Carncross	Mackenzie, M.	Shera
Carroll	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Dawson	McGuire	Smith, W. C.
Duncan	McGowan	Swan
Duthie	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Fish	McLean	Taylor
Fisher	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Fraser	Moore	Valentine
Hall	Newman	Ward
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Willis
Hogg	Parata	Wright.
Houston	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Reeves	Buick
Kapa	Rhodes	Mills, C. H.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Mackenzie, T.	Thompson, T.

Majority against, 40.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 3.—Electoral districts of colony constituted ordinary licensing districts.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words, "The electoral districts for the time being in existence, constituted for the representation of the people in the House of Representatives," be struck out, with the view of inserting, in lieu thereof, "All counties and boroughs respectively."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 39.

Blake	Kapa	Russell
Buckland	Kelly, J.	Seddon
Buick	Kelly, W.	Shera
Cadman	Lawry	Swan
Carncross	Mackintosh	Taylor
Carroll	McGowan	Thompson, R.
Dawson	McKenzie, J.	Valentine
Duncan	McLean	Ward
Fish	Mills, C. H.	Willis
Fisher	O'Connor	Wright.
Fraser	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Reeves	Pinkerton
Houston	Richardson	Sandford.
Hutchison, W.		

NOES, 23.

Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Smith, W. C.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Stout
Duthie	Meredith	Taipua
Fergus	Mitchelson	Tanner
Hall	Moore	Wilson.
Hall-Jones	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Palmer	Earnshaw
Lake	Rhodes	Harkness.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Smith, E. M.	Mills, J.
Thompson, T.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 16.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4.—Special licenses may be granted when population suddenly increased.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words "or reduced" be added to the words "unless the determination of the electors has been previously made that no license shall be granted," which had been inserted after the word "may" in line 23, on the motion of Mr. Seddon.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added."

AYES, 22.

Buchanan	Hall-Jones	Newman
Duthie	Harkness	O'Connor
Earnshaw	Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton
Fisher	Mackenzie, T.	Sandford
Hall	Moore	Shera

Stout
Taipua
Tanner

Thompson, R.
Wright.
Tellers.
Joyce
Meredith.

NOES, 37.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Richardson
Buckland	Lake	Russell
Buick	Mackenzie, M.	Seddon
Cadman	Mackintosh	Smith, W. C.
Carroll	McGuire	Swan
Dawson	McGowan	Valentine
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Fergus	McLean	Willis
Fish	Mills, C. H.	Wilson.
Fraser	Mitchelson	
Hogg	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Reeves	Carncross
Kapa	Rhodes	Smith, E. M.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Thompson, T.

Majority against, 15.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. BLAKE moved, That the word "seven," in the words "at the ratio of one licensed house to every seven hundred persons," be struck out, with the view of inserting the word "five."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word 'seven' stand part of the clause."

AYES, 33.

Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Buick	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McGuire	Stout
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Earnshaw	McLean	Tanner
Fisher	Meredith	Taylor
Hall	Moore	Ward
Hall-Jones	Newman	Wright.
Harkness	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Reeves	Joyce
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	Shera.
Lawry		

NOES, 29.

Blake	Houston	Russell
Buchanan	Kapa	Smith, W. C.
Buckland	Kelly, W.	Swan
Cadman	Lake	Thompson, R.
Carncross	Mackenzie, M.	Valentine
Dawson	Mackintosh	Willis
Duthie	O'Connor	Wilson.
Fergus	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Rhodes	Mills, C. H.
Fraser	Richardson	Palmer.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Thompson, T.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 4.

Word retained.

Clause 5.—Licensing Committees. Who may be member of a Licensing Committee.

Mr. C. H. MILLS moved, That the words "maltster, distiller," in line 37, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 36.

Bruce	Kapa	Reeves
Buchanan	Kelly, J.	Sandford
Buick	Kelly, W.	Shera
Carncross	Lake	Stout
Carroll	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Duncan	McGuire	Tanner
Duthie	McLean	Willis
Earnshaw	Meredith	Wilson
Fisher	Mitchelson	Wright.
Hall	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Newman	Joyce
Houston	Pinkerton	Smith, W. C.
Hutchison, W.		

NOES, 24.

Blake	McGowan	Seddon
Buckland	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Cadman	O'Connor	Swan
Dawson	Palmer	Thompson, R.
Fish	Parata	Valentine.
Fraser	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Richardson	Mills, C. H.
Lawry	Russell	Taylor.
Mackenzie, M.		

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Thompson, T.	Hutchison, G.

Majority for, 12.

Words retained.

Mr. TANNER moved, That the words, "or in the employment of," be inserted after the word "with," in line 39.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 10.

Buick	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	O'Connor	Sandford
Hutchison, W.	Stout	Tanner.
Joyce	Taipua.	

NOES, 47.

Blake	Kelly, J.	Rhodes
Bruce	Kelly, W.	Richardson
Buchanan	Lake	Russell
Buckland	Lawry	Seddon
Cadman	Mackenzie, M.	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, W. C.
Carroll	Mackintosh	Swan
Dawson	McGuire	Taylor
Duncan	McGowan	Thompson, R.
Duthie	McKenzie, J.	Valentine
Fish	McLean	Willis
Fisher	Mills, C. H.	Wilson
Fraser	Mitchelson	Wright.
Harkness	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Meredith
Houston	Reeves	Shera.

Majority against, 37.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 6.—Constitution of Licensing Committees.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved, That the word "nine" be struck out, with the view of inserting "seven."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 35.

Blake	Hutchison, W.	Rhodes
Buckland	Kelly, J.	Sandford
Buick	Kelly, W.	Seddon
Cadman	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	Mackintosh	Swan
Dawson	McGuire	Tanner
Duncan	McGowan	Taylor
Fergus	McKenzie, J.	Valentine
Fisher	McLean	Willis.
Fraser	Mills, C. H.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Parata	Fish
Houston	Reeves	Pinkerton.

NOES, 25.

Bruce	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Stout
Duthie	Moore	Thompson, R.
Hall	Newman	Wilson
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Wright.
Joyce	Palmer	
Lake	Richardson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackenzie, M.	Russell	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, T.	Shera	Harkness.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Thompson, T.	Hutchison, G.
Ward	Mills, J.
Carroll.	Taipua.

Majority for, 10.

Amendment negatived.

Progress reported.

The House adjourned at five minutes to two o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 23rd August, 1893.

First Readings—Second Readings—Martini-Henry Rifles—Taranaki Relief Fund Distribution Bill—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Companies Bill, Native Trusts and Claims Definition and Registration Bill.

SECOND READINGS.

Lyttelton Orphanage Lands Vesting Bill, Customs and Excise Duties Bill, Rohe Potae Investigation of Title Bill.

MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Whether it is true, as stated in the public papers, that the Government has ordered one thousand or other number of Martini-Henry rifles, and, if so, who is the contractor for the supply, and what is the mark of the arm to be purchased?

Is there any objection to lay the contract on the table?

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said that nothing had been definitely settled in the matter of the contract, and the whole of the proceedings were under negotiation. As soon as the necessary information had been obtained he would give it to the honourable member.

TARANAKI RELIEF FUND DISTRIBUTION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said the Bill had already been before the Local Bills Committee, which had made no alteration in it. Therefore he hoped it would receive favourable consideration from the Council. It had also been approved of by the people of Taranaki. The purpose of the Bill was to deal with funds amounting to about £160, which was the remaining balance of a fund collected in Taranaki and other parts of the colony, and in England, in the early part of 1860, to give relief to persons who were rendered destitute by the Maori War, and who were driven from their homes. The fund was distributed then, but a small balance was deposited in the bank in the names of fourteen trustees. One would have thought that in the multitude of counsellors there would have been wisdom, especially as there were so many trustees; but it appeared that the amount had been deposited in the bank on interest, and had then been forgotten. It had been for the benefit of the bank, but not for the benefit of any of the people. It was discovered in consequence of a Bill that was proposed to be introduced into Parliament for the purpose of dealing with unclaimed bank balances. The amount he referred to remained in the bank for about thirty years. The principal trustees having died, the rest had forgotten it, and no one seemed to know that the amount was in the bank, and it had become known to the people of New Plymouth in the manner he had indicated. He might mention that there was a society in New Plymouth, called the Scenery Preservation Society, having for its object the preservation of the local flora and scenery from destruction. There were also two Domain Boards that looked after the forests surrounding Mount Egmont. It was proposed by the Bill to devote two-thirds of the balance to the conservation of the State forests, under the control of these Boards. The other third was to be devoted to recreation-grounds in New Plymouth, which were public property set apart for the recreation of the public. The people at New Plymouth had raised a large sum for the purpose of improving these grounds and rendering them suitable for recreation purposes. It was proposed to give the other portion of the fund—namely, one-third—to the purpose of improving these grounds. There were no private interests concerned in the matter. The property to which it was proposed to apply the fund was public property. He hoped, with this explanation, the Council would agree to the fund being appropriated as was proposed. It was in no

way required for charitable purposes, and he thought the fund could not be better applied than to the care of those forest reserves which had been set apart for the pleasure of the public, not only for the District of Taranaki, but for the whole colony. He hoped the Council would agree to the Bill.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN might say that he had felt some disposition to offer opposition to the passing of the Bill when it was first introduced, on the ground that the subscriptions were not local subscriptions as far as the Province of Taranaki was concerned. The money had been subscribed colonially, and it had even a larger scope, because contributions were obtained from persons outside the colony. Another reason that had induced him to oppose the Bill was that there was already on the statute-book a general law—namely, “The Charitable Funds Appropriation Act, 1871.” That Act was passed for the purpose of providing for the distribution of funds collected for charitable purposes under such contingencies as had been mentioned, and where there was a balance remaining undisposed of. The question of disposing of this money under the provisions of that Act had been carefully considered in the Local Bills Committee, and it had been shown satisfactorily that compliance with that statute in this case was difficult, if not impracticable, owing to the lapse of time and change of circumstances; and it was thought advisable to give this balance, amounting to some £170 or £180, to the people of Taranaki for public purposes, as Taranaki was the greatest sufferer by the war. He thought there was nothing unreasonable in the matter, and he would therefore not further oppose the passing of the Bill. The amount could not be better applied, in his opinion, or to a more fitting purpose there, than that proposed.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS did not agree with this system of devoting to local purposes sums that had been contributed for a special object from all parts of the colony. He thought that such funds should be devoted in the same manner as the Kaitangata Relief Fund last year—namely, to purposes similar to that for which it was raised. If he mistook not, there was some £12,000 in the Kaitangata Relief Fund that was contributed over what was required. The Kaitangata people did not say that these funds should be applied to beautify their village, but they were quite prepared to hand over the money to the colony for similar purposes to that for which it was contributed—that was, for use in case of accident occurring in any of the mines in the colony. He thought that where there was a surplus it should be devoted to some colonial fund, to be set apart for a similar purpose as that for which it was raised. If they were to adopt a course like this, in future, should any calamity occur in any part of the colony, people would be more likely to contribute than if they thought the money was not to be applied to the purpose it was asked for. He did not like to oppose the second reading, but he thought it would be as

well if the Bill were allowed to stand over, and if the Government were to introduce a measure next session making provision for all such cases. He did not see why the Kaitangata Relief Fund should be dealt with differently from this. Two sessions ago a similar Bill was passed, handing over to the City of Nelson a sum of money collected for the same purpose. A large portion of that amount—he believed the largest portion—came from Otago and Canterbury, and yet the surplus was devoted to the City of Nelson. In the same way it was proposed under this Bill to devote this amount to the Town of New Plymouth. He held that the principle was wrong, and it was better to delay the consideration of the Bill. He was not going to press his argument too far: at the same time, to test the opinion of the Council, he would move, *That the Bill be read the second time this day six months.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN, as a member of the Committee that had investigated this Bill, thought it only right to explain to his honourable friend the position of the matter. It was quite true that it was a serious thing to apply funds collected for certain purposes to other purposes; but this was a very old matter. There was an Act now on the statute-book which would allow the proposal in the present Bill to be carried out; but there was a difficulty in applying this fund in the manner provided in the statute, as there was no one to put the Act in motion, and therefore there was no other way of dealing with it except by a Bill. He could assure his honourable friend that the position he (Mr. McLean) had taken up was the proper one, and had there been any difficulty about it he would have been the last to support the Bill. They had examined the Bill, and, as he had said, every one was satisfied to allow it to go through for the purpose for which it had been promoted, and there was no difficulty in the matter at all. Therefore he would ask his honourable friend to withdraw his amendment, and allow the Bill to pass. He could assure the honourable gentleman, as one who had looked thoroughly into these matters, that everything was in order, and the Bill was one which should be allowed to proceed.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI hoped the day was far distant when the money would be required for the purposes for which it was raised. They were now living in a time of peace, and they hoped long to enjoy peaceful times, and consequently there was no reason why the money should not be applied to the purposes to which his honourable friend hoped it would not be applied. There could be nothing better than to distribute this small sum of £170 for planting purposes, for it would prove of benefit not only to the particular district specially concerned, but to the whole colony; and he trusted that the Hon. Mr. Reynolds would see his way to withdraw his opposition to the Bill. Surely £170 was not so great an item as to cause his honourable friend to oppose the Bill. The money was to be expended in a manner beneficial to the public, and consequently he could

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see no reason why the Bill should not be proceeded with.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY looked upon the Hon. Mr. Reynolds as the watch-dog of the Council, and that honourable gentleman was, no doubt, very useful, but in this case he had barked more than there was any occasion for. There was no occasion whatever to preserve the interests of the colony, because this Bill did not attack them. The Taranaki people did not claim to own Mount Egmont—they looked on it as a colonial possession; and this money was to be applied to preserving the forest-land round Mount Egmont—to prevent the destruction of those forests which the Council a few days ago was so very anxious to preserve. If the Council meant practical business, the best course they could pursue would be to set aside this money as proposed, because he assured the Council that it was the earnest desire of the Scenery Preservation Society and Domain Boards in Taranaki to maintain the forest-land round Mount Egmont in its present state of preservation, and prevent exploring parties or pleasure parties from destroying the timber and thereby lessening the beauty of the district. He thought that his honourable friend Mr. Reynolds, when he considered the question, would withdraw his amendment, because he did not think that the Bill would prove detrimental to the interests of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS asked leave to withdraw his amendment. He merely wanted to raise a discussion so as to keep the Government up to the mark.

Amendment withdrawn, and Bill read the second time.

ELECTORAL BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR.—Sir, when I was interrupted yesterday at the hour of adjournment I was referring to what is the most prevalent argument in the discussion of the question that is now before us, and the argument that probably has more influence with most people than any other, and that is the argument as to the proper sphere of woman. It would be interesting, as I was remarking, to trace the origin of this idea. I do not intend to detain the Council with that. I merely remark that it seems to me there is really no stronger argument forthcoming in support of this contention than the argument that what has been must continue to be, and that because in the past we have been used to see woman occupy one particular sphere—namely, the domestic sphere—therefore this has become, and is necessarily, her only proper sphere. It has been said on this, somewhat humorously, that English children who have never seen a parrot in its natural state would naturally come to the conclusion that the proper and only sphere for the parrot is a cage; and that its proper function is to say "Pretty Polly!" and it seems to me that the very same is really the only foundation there is for this argument I am now referring to. The Hon. Mr. Bowen has enlarged very fully upon the serious danger

that would be incurred if this law were altered, and has, in very glowing terms, described the consequences that he thinks would ensue, not only to women, but to politics and public life. I, for one, am convinced that no harm will ensue from women taking part in public life: on the contrary, I am convinced that it would give women some more definite and more distinct aim in life than many women now have, and that it would be to a great many women, and to those who most require it, a very great advantage indeed. It was said by the Hon. Mr. Bowen that now women have very great influence, and there is no necessity at all to interfere by law in order to extend and enlarge that influence. We know there is a great deal of truth in this: but it is always important that influence should be exercised under a due sense of responsibility. There is no education so valuable as the training that arises from the necessity of acting and advising under a due sense of responsibility; and if the effect of this would be to enlarge the influence of women, I think it may be taken to be one of the strongest arguments in favour of this change. I have no fear at all as to the effects upon women. It seems to me that the probable consequences and effects upon woman of her taking part in political life have been, to say the least, very much exaggerated. I do not believe that woman would be in the least injured by taking part in politics, and I cannot conceive how it can be supposed that the exercise of the right of suffrage would entail upon woman the diversion of so much time and attention from what have been described as her proper duties that the result would be disastrous. I am sure that the discharge of political duties by women would take up much less time and require much less of her attention than, for example, a few balls in a twelvemonths entail upon her. I think if the attention of women were directed to more serious and sober duties there would be less going to balls, and spending perhaps the small hours of the morning in such affairs would be less common. At all events, I think the effects of women taking part in politics have been very much exaggerated. Another form which this argument as to the sphere of women has taken recently more particularly—and which was referred to by Sir George Whitmore—is that they are naturally unfitted to take part in military service; that, military service being a primary duty of men, and women by their nature being unfitted for this service, therefore it follows that she has no right to the demand that is now made by her. It seems to me that at the root of this argument there is a very palpable fallacy. It appears to me that it cannot be contended that all women are any better fitted for a domestic career than it can be contended that all men are fitted for a military career; and that this consideration affords a complete answer to this argument, which has been adduced in very influential quarters. And we all know, for instance, that there are many exemptions from military service, even as matters now stand, but it has never been suggested that, because

many men are rendered unfit by reason of bodily infirmity for military service, those men should be deprived of the suffrage. It has never been suggested that professional men, for instance, whose services are considerably more valuable at home, should be deprived of the right of exercising the franchise. I think that these considerations afford a complete answer to this argument, which has become recently almost the only argument that is left of any avail among the arguments that have been from time to time adduced against this proposal. It has been said here, and it is said throughout the country, that women do not want the suffrage. Now, if what is meant by this is that all the women in the country do not ask for the suffrage, of course that is perfectly correct. I admit that is so, and I admit, furthermore, that, so far as I am aware, not even a majority of the women of the country—I am bound to admit that—are anxious for emancipation; and I am free to admit, also, that it is difficult to say whether or not all those women who have signed the petitions on the table of the Council are really anxious for the suffrage. We know from our own experience that men as well as women are apt to sign petitions on merely being asked to do so. In saying that, I am saying what is within the knowledge of all of us. But, Sir, it seems to me that the question of whether all, or a majority, or one-fifth of the women of the colony ask for the suffrage, is really of very little consequence. Of this there can be no doubt: that a considerable proportion—I put the matter as mildly as that—of the women who signed those petitions are desirous of being emancipated. I am sure there can be no doubt that it must have cost the persons who got up those petitions a considerable amount of time and trouble, and the signatures this year are more numerous than they were last year; and it will not be denied that the movement for the emancipation of women is making very rapid progress in this colony. Whatever weight or consideration, whether little or much, may be given to those petitions, it is beyond question that a large number of the women of the colony are determined and thoroughly in earnest in asserting what they consider to be their right. I myself consider that it does not much matter whether one-seventh or one-thirtieth of the women of the colony are in this class; it is sufficient for me that a considerable proportion of them consider that in being deprived of the franchise they are suffering a grave injustice. That there are a large number of women in this position I think every member of the Council will admit frankly—as I admitted with regard to the number—and that, I think, in itself should be a sufficient reason why this Council should say that the time has come for the emancipation of those women. I say, if there is a considerable number of women who demand the right it would be an injustice to deprive them of that right because a large number of women say nothing about it. It is within the knowledge of us all that there never

has been an unemancipated class of persons that did not contain among them a large majority who were at least apathetic. It is, I think, within the knowledge of us all that large numbers of such classes have been perfectly content as they were. In the case of the emancipation of the slaves in America, in 1863, one of the arguments adduced against the emancipation was that large numbers—perhaps the greater number—of slaves were quite content with the condition they were in. So it may be in the case of women to a large extent—that they have come to consider that the condition in which they are now with regard to the suffrage is their natural condition. The arguments as to the number of women who have demanded emancipation are, I submit, of little weight, and the language used with regard to the petitions which have been presented to this House has not been, to say the least of it, very appropriate. One honourable member expressed himself to the effect that he would attach no more weight to those petitions if they were high enough to reach the ceiling. Now, if no weight at all is to be attached to such petitions, I would ask, how are we to judge as to whether a particular class is desirous of any proposed change or not? It is admitted, apparently, from the use of this argument, that if a large majority of the women of the colony demanded this change it would probably be a proper thing to grant it. How, then, are we to ascertain whether or not a large number of women do demand this right? Is not the exercise of the right of petitioning this House the proper and constitutional way of expressing a demand? I submit, therefore, that honourable members were not justified in using the language they did in regard to these petitions, and in speaking as they did of those women who have taken the trouble to prepare the petitions and send them to this House. There was something to me very inappropriate in the terms used by one honourable gentleman in referring to the women who signed these petitions. After all, the main question for us now is not, How many or what proportion of the women of the colony demand this right at all? The primary question for us to consider is, Is this right or is it not? Is it just or is it not? No doubt it is very proper to consider, also, whether the proposed change would be expedient, and whether it would be desirable. I perfectly admit that. But, assuming that honourable members have satisfied themselves that this proposal is a just and right one, I think they may very well rest assured that whatever is right and just cannot in the long-run be otherwise than desirable and expedient. That is my position. I am convinced that this demand made by a large number of the women of the colony is a right and a just one, and I am prepared to take justice as my guide; for justice, after all, alone can keep the balance true between conflicting interests; and I would urge upon the members of this Council who have come to the same conclusion as to the justice of this demand that they should look upon the matter in this light. There is

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another consideration that may very well be taken into account, I think, and that is, judging by the very great progress that this movement has made within the last few years, and judging by the results of the discussions and divisions that have taken place in England on this subject, the day cannot be far distant in England, as well as here, when this demand must be conceded. Sir, I do not suggest that this is in itself any reason—or, at all events, any sufficient reason—why honourable members should yield to this demand at present; but I say that this consideration—that the change must inevitably come within a very short time—is a very proper one for honourable members to take into account. That is the view of the question to which I ask the attention of honourable members, and I say that is a perfectly right and proper view, assuming that honourable members are convinced of the justice of the claim: I say that the fact—and I believe it is a fact—that this change must inevitably come should be taken into account. There is another argument which has been a great deal depended upon, and which has been raised by the Hon. Mr. Bowen, and will, no doubt, be raised again, and that is, that this question has not been sufficiently before the country. That is an argument which is very much open to abuse. I admit it is a proper thing—that, indeed, it is probably the peculiar function of this Council—to take care that proposed great constitutional changes shall be fully and deliberately considered by the country before any action is taken. But I would also utter a word of warning with regard to this argument: that it is an argument that will be used merely as a make-believe by those who are determined by every means in their power to defeat this measure. We know from our experience, and from our knowledge of history, that very many great reforms which have been on the very eve of consummation have been deferred for many years by such considerations as these; and all I wish to do now is to urge upon those members of this Council who have arrived at a definite personal conviction on this subject that they should not be induced to throw their weight into the scale with the enemies of this measure. I warn those honourable members who profess to believe that this is a just and proper thing to grant to the women of the country that they should be on their guard against being in any way misled by those who are inveterate opponents of this proposed reform.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—It has been stated, Sir, by two other members of this Council that this should not be considered a party measure. With that I entirely agree. Why, Sir, the father of this Bill, who is in another place, sits alongside a gentleman who has a large amount of responsibility. The two gentlemen, though belonging to the one party, are diametrically opposed on this measure. That is evidence that this cannot, or should not, be a party measure. There are many important matters in this Bill, but they are as nothing compared with the question of the

woman's suffrage; and though I should like to say some words upon these other comparatively-unimportant things, I may have to speak at some length—longer, perhaps, than some honourable members who have spoken; therefore I shall not touch upon these points, but will leave them to be discussed, so far as I am concerned, in Committee. When I refer to what has been said in this Council I hope I shall not seem antagonistic to any honourable gentleman. A number of honourable gentlemen have brought forward arguments which they considered very forcible. It was said that this is a leap in the dark, and that the matter should go before the country for the people to determine whether this Bill should pass or not. Now, Sir, we in this Council, and the people in this colony, naturally look to the Mother-country for guidance in parliamentary usage—I think, wisely; and if I am not wearying honourable members I should like to call attention to what has taken place there within the memory of some honourable gentlemen now present on matters that all are conversant with. I shall not go back to ancient history, though I should have no hesitation in doing so if I thought it would be of importance, but I will go back to the year 1829, when one of the most important measures that have ever come before the British Parliament was passed—that measure which was considered to be of such vital importance that it would overturn the British Constitution, and which was considered to be so fraught with direful consequences as to be nothing short of revolution. Even the King himself it was said could not assent to the measure without being forsworn; and yet that measure was brought before the House without having first been referred to the country. It was brought forward, by what was called in those days “surprise legislation,” by the Duke of Wellington and Robert Peel. It was carried by them against the opinions they had expressed for many years—that measure that enfranchised millions of human beings under the British Crown. And I venture to say, Sir, that there is no reasonable man in the British dominions to-day that will not say it was a just and proper measure. Now, I will pursue my line of argument, and come to the Act of 1832—a measure which was considered to be certain to overturn society, and give to the mob, as it was called, such power that gentlemen could no longer live in England. That Act was passed against the wish of the House of Lords, because of the action of the Ministry in threatening to add additional members to that Chamber. That Act was to overturn society. And what happened nine years after that? The strongest Ministry that has conducted public affairs in England for the last ninety years came into office, under Sir Robert Peel, and passed a measure of extreme importance, that of Free-trade, which was never submitted to the country. Those Ministers were returned to Parliament pledged against that measure, and they passed it without consulting the country. So much for consulting the constituencies, and so much for passing measures

which should be remitted for the consideration of the country before they become law. Now, when the British Parliament, with all its traditions, and all its veneration for that which has been, passed these two great measures, shall we say that in this Parliament, after this measure has come up from another place for two sessions, and when this Council affirmed the principle last session, this matter should be remitted to the country? Sir, take the great measure of 1868, which enfranchised a great many electors in England: then was the phrase coined, or, at all events, used by the Earl of Derby, that it was “a leap in the dark,” and it was characterized by Carlyle as “shooting Niagara”; but that great measure passed. In 1870 another measure of great importance to the people of England became law, in consequence of previous measures which were introduced—that great Education measure; and it had this effect: that in the year 1892 the British Parliament voted £7,800,000 for education. In the year 1840 £30,000 only was voted for Great Britain—less than £100,000 for the whole of the United Kingdom. Did they then think it possible for the British Parliament to grant such an enormous sum as £7,800,000? Had the people not been more educated than in 1840? For the last forty years, Sir, the people have gone on widening their views; they have a more correct conception of their duties, of what one man owes to another as a brother, and now we have arrived at the year 1893, and we have this Bill before us, which, we were told, it is dangerous to pass—we are told it is dangerous to intrust the franchise to women. Is it because they are not educated? Is it because they are not as thoroughly capable of judging as a man is? Is it because they will not judge as honestly as a man would? No; it cannot be that. Think of what we have done in the way of education for the last twenty or twenty-five years. Think how capable women have shown themselves of receiving instruction and profiting by it. We have a University, the first in the British Dominions which granted degrees to women, and we find that eighty-five women have taken their B.A. degree, and fifty-seven of those women took the degree with honours. We find, further, that they have taken fifty-five University scholarships. Then, there are about two hundred young women at the present time under instruction at our colleges, working for the degree. I have been twenty-five years on a Board of Education, and I have found that women are quite as well qualified to teach as men are. I have found that they perform their duties with as much assiduity, that they are as earnest in their endeavours, and are in all cases as thoroughly to be relied on to do their duties as men. I see in the high schools young women who have taken degrees teaching. I see throughout the whole length and breadth of the land that the education of women is a great fact which would not have been dreamed of forty or fifty years ago. I say that the education of women, and their ability to exercise this vote, are so different from

what men in past times have been accustomed to consider women capable of that we should let this measure go onward now without fear and with perfect confidence. It has been stated that in America, and in the State of Wyoming, there is a difference of opinion as to how the women's vote acts there. Mr. Bryce, a historian of great honesty, I think, gives a rather doubtful opinion; but I have read an article by Julian Ralph in the June number of *Harper's Magazine* which is very clear and decided. He says that the women go to the polls in carriages and on foot, and that woman's influence on an election has no deteriorating effect, but a most beneficial effect upon the men. The women of America have been educated for a very long time. They have been further in advance than the women of England or her dependencies, and the men have paid more respect to them than is the case in many other parts of the world. A woman comes into a street car or a railway and the men at once give place to her. Everywhere that is the sort of respect that is paid to her. Everywhere, without hesitation, the best position is given up to the women, because of their intelligence—the result of education. I would ask the attention of this Council while I read a few passages showing what the women have done and are doing to-day in America, and I think it will be a gratification to honourable members to learn what women can do. I beg them to read the carefully-written article that I have just now referred to by Julian Ralph, in *Harper's Magazine* for June last. I beg members to refer to that magazine, and they will see set forth there, very briefly, and yet with detail, such a history of woman's doings in the Town of Chicago as will show that, if any person can be relied on to endeavour to improve the condition of humanity, it is woman. I shall only take up the time of the Council, Sir, by reading two or three short extracts. We are accustomed rather to regard the Town of Chicago as a place of commerce for one particular thing. We are accustomed to look upon America, sometimes, as rough; but, on the other hand, we see, by evidence like this, that, in point of fact, it is the very country for these social experiments and undertakings so successfully carried out by women. In Chicago, by the influence of woman, and solely through the influence of woman, they have erected a building that cost one million dollars, called "The Women's Temperance Temple." There is in Chicago a women's club with five hundred members, and these are the kind of people that are in that club:—

"The membership is made up of almost every kind of women, from the ultra-fashionable society leaders to the working-women, and includes literary and other professional women, business women, and plain wives and daughters. 'And,' say the members, 'women who never hear anything anywhere else, hear everything that is going on in the world by attending the club meetings.' It is impossible to name all the women who are conspicuous in the club."

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They are divided into six great committees, called the Committees on Reform, Philanthropy, Education, Home, Art and Literature, Science, and Philosophy. And the first thing that one of these committees did was to attack the management of the lunatic asylums. They found things to be so thoroughly bad there that I do not like even to read the particulars: members can see them for themselves. I will merely say the women went into this matter with such energy and determination that they succeeded in achieving a great reform. They considered women should be the peculiar care of women, and they took care to have a woman doctor appointed to attend to the poor unfortunate women in the asylums; and the condition of things was so much altered for the better that any person reading the account that is given of their doings will be glad to think that there are such women in the country. The next thing they attacked was the poorhouse, and this is what took place:—

"She led the next Reform Committee into the poorhouse, where they went, as they always do, with the plea, 'There are women there; we want a share in the charge of that place, for the sake of our sex.' They have adopted the motto, 'What are you doing with the women and children?' and they find that the politicians cannot turn aside so natural and proper an inquiry. The politicians try to frighten the women. They say, 'You don't want to pry into such things and places; you can't stand it.' But the Chicago ladies have proved that they can stand a very great deal, as we shall see, on behalf of humanity; especially feminine humanity. 'You are using great sums of money for the care of the poor, the sick, the insane, and the vicious,' they say. 'One-half of these are women; and we, as women, insist upon knowing how you are performing your task. We do not believe you bring the motherly or sisterly element to your aid; we know that you do not understand women's requirements.' That line of argument has always proved irresistible."

Sir, they made enormous changes. This writer says,—

"While I was in Chicago in August some of the women were looking over the plans for four new police-stations. It transpired as they talked that they have succeeded in establishing a Woman's Advisory Board of the Police, consisting of ten women appointed by the Chief of Police, and in charge of the quarters of all women and children prisoners, and of the stationhouse matrons, two of whom are allotted to each station where women are taken. Through the work of her women, Chicago led in this reform, which is now extending to the chief cities of the country."

Sir, the reform that they made was so great and the spirit shown by the women was so striking that—

"In all cases in which women complain of abuse or mistreatment by the police or others, Mrs. Logan sits on the Police Trial Board, 'to show the unfortunate woman that she has a friend.' The Board is composed of five in-

spectors and the assistant chief of police, and the president asked her to join its sessions whenever a woman is involved in any case that comes before it. The police do not oppose the work of the women."

I am not going to make any further quotations, as I do not wish to trespass on the patience of members, but I hope honourable members will read the article for themselves. I may, however, say, as dollars weigh a good deal with people, that when they wanted in Chicago to establish dormitories in the University it was found that owing to the nature of the trust the funds could not be applied for that purpose, and as so many young girls were attending the college the women took upon themselves the raising of the necessary money for building these dormitories, and three women contributed \$50,000 each for that purpose. The number of things that the women have done, and the plans they have formed for aiding women in their endeavours to improve their condition, are such that we might well profit by the example; and I think members may derive profit and pleasure from the perusal of the work to which I have referred. Now, Sir, it has been said—coming more immediately to the question before the Council—that the husband is the breadwinner, and that the wife should attend to the home duties. But while I think the husband is, or should be, the breadwinner, I would ask, how many men—instead of taking their earnings to their wives to be applied for the benefit of the household and the children—how many men, I ask, go to the public-house and part with a good deal of those earnings there? I venture to say, if women had the power, there would be few or no low-class publichouses in the country, and I think that in itself would be an enormous gain to the community. It has been said that the granting of the suffrage to women would give men two votes. Well, Sir, married men have given hostages to society, and I am not sure that it would be such a great calamity if married men had two votes. I know there are some forty thousand more males in this country than there are females. I know that many of the adult unmarried males have no permanent homes in New Zealand—I speak only of those not born here—that they have only, so to say, resting-places in the colony for the day, and that, if something turns up in some other colony, we may have thousands going off with a light foot, or, to use a sailor's phrase, they having no anchor down. So I say, if the women can by their votes counteract the influence of these men who have no abiding-place in the colony, and who care comparatively little for its permanent welfare, it would not be such a bad thing, even if the husbands were going to induce the women to vote as they wished. But I am not at all sure the husbands would do that. I question whether, in many cases, it would not be the woman who would have the two votes. At all events, I am sure that if we give woman the franchise she will talk to her husband in their own house,

and that public matters will be discussed there in a manner that will be beneficial to the husband. I think that when candidates stand for Parliament their antecedents, what may be called their character—a very important thing—will be closely studied, and that the women, if they can help it, will not allow their husbands—and women's influence is strong in the household—to vote, nor will they vote themselves, for men without good character. I venture to say that character will be a more important part of a candidate's qualifications when women have a vote than it has been in the past; and I think, if that is so, it will be a great thing for the future of this colony if we intrust the franchise to women. Sir, it has been said that women would unsex themselves by descending into the arena of political strife among the men. My impression, however, is that woman's presence would restrain men from immoderate language or from saying anything that a woman should not hear. My impression is that the moral tone of public speakers would be elevated, that they would have more respect for the decencies of life, that the whole tenor of the speeches would be better; that, in short, reason and argument would be more resorted to, that instead of mere abuse reason would be more valued, and that public speakers would not have recourse to the strong language or personal abuse which I am sorry to say is so often made use of at present. There can be no doubt of this, and I firmly believe that the women's influence would be exercised for good; and I say that every man who would stand up to speak before women would take care that they should not hear anything that would be improper. If women had the franchise I believe the men would recognise that, and would be more moderate in their language. It has been said that the logical conclusion from women having the franchise is that they should be elected to the Legislature. That is the logic of the position. I grant it. But, Sir, we have a Bill before us which we may have a difficulty in passing, and the mind of the men throughout the colony is not so far advanced at present as to give women the right of sitting in the Legislature. And it is never a wise thing to load a Bill unnecessarily; it is never a wise thing to attempt to legislate far in advance of public opinion; but the time will come when women will sit in the Legislative Chamber, and give their votes and their opinions just as the men do now. Sir, I have not been long in this Chamber; I have been more years in another place. But I am proud to be associated with such a body of men as I find here. Nothing has been said since I came here, and I venture to say nothing has occurred in any proceedings that have taken place here, that any woman of the greatest delicacy might not have heard or taken part in without any loss of her womanly feeling. Why should not all legislation be conducted in just as orderly a manner as it is in this Chamber? I have listened to debates here, and I have seen that honourable members give careful attention;

there is no desire to descend to personalities, or to indulge in abuse of any kind; and why could not legislation be conducted like this in all Legislatures? And so I firmly believe it would be if women were admitted into the Chambers. I do think there is no doubt that, when men rise to the occasion, and see that the granting of this suffrage has been for the benefit of society, they will grant the further privilege that if the electors wish to send a woman to the Representative Chamber she shall have the right to go. I shall not presume to offer advice to honourable members in this Chamber, all of whom are at least quite as able to judge as I, but I earnestly hope this Bill will pass. I shall vote for the measure, because I have a firm conviction that if the franchise be granted women will have an extended sphere of usefulness, in which they will exercise a beneficial influence without in the slightest degree impairing their womanly qualities. I shall vote for it because it is only a simple act of justice, and I have no fear or misgiving of its results. I shall vote for it because it is a right which should not be withheld.

The Hon. Mr. HART.—I am only going to detain the Council for a few minutes to indicate what I saw when I was last in England. A friend who was a member of the London County Council favoured me with a ticket of admission to one of the meetings of that institution. Not only are women entitled to vote in the election of members of that Council, but they are also entitled, if elected, to sit in the Council. There were three ladies present, and they gave the Council reports from the districts which they represented. I was very much struck with the clearness, brevity, and force with which they made their remarks, and I thought to myself, if men would be as brief and clear and forcible in their remarks much of the time of the Legislature would be saved. I am satisfied that women can convey any meaning they wish to convey, without occupying a moment beyond what is necessary for giving the information they wish to impart—important information though that may be. I am not going to speak more on this subject, but I wish to call attention to what I believe to be a blot in this Bill. It does not amend the representation of the towns—the four principal towns in New Zealand. It still allows every man in any one of those towns, if he is twenty-one years of age, to vote for three members, while he may not have two sixpences belonging to him beyond his daily pay; while a man in the country owning property in three electorates may only vote for one. Now, considering that there are twelve members elected in this way, what is this, as far as it goes, but putting the property of the country at the mercy of the mob? When this Constitution was first established, and the franchise extended, the towns were divided into three electorates, and one man could only vote for one member; but, while there has been this agitation about “one man one vote” in the country, they have still retained “one man three votes” in the towns. And I think that

persons who maintain three votes for residents in the towns, while they insist on only one vote for residents in the country, are grossly inconsistent. This is all I have to say; only I think that while this Bill is under consideration a provision should be made for dividing the towns into three electorates, as they were formerly.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—It appears to me, from the discussion which has taken place on this Bill, not only in another branch of the Legislature, but also in this Council, that there is practically only one section that is of a debatable character. There have been two or three other clauses which have been referred to as being open to amendment, such, for instance, as the clause defining the qualifications of voters. It has been maintained by two or three honourable members that this clause might be amended in the direction of having one qualification only, and that a residential one. I think that is a proper thing. I do not see the use of admitting more than one qualification, and if there is any intention to amend the Bill in Committee in that direction I shall only be too glad to assist. With regard to the debatable clause which I just mentioned—honourable members know what I mean, the clause giving the electoral franchise to women—I shall immediately come to this, as that seems to be absorbing the whole attention of the Legislature at present. Well, I think, Sir, that before we refuse to grant the franchise to women we should ask the question, Why do we grant it to men? Before we start the discussion we should have some solid standing-ground, some logical position or principle to build up our argument from; and the only way to do this is to ask this question: On what ground do we give the franchise to men? I presume the answer to this is an admitted one: that men get the franchise simply because they pay the taxation of the country, and are amenable to the laws of the country. That is not only the answer of political science, but it is the answer of common-sense. If you go into the street, and ask any man of ordinary intelligence why he claims to be on the electoral roll, he will say, “Don’t I pay taxation? Don’t I obey the laws? And don’t you think I have a right, as I do these things, to have a voice in saying how the taxes are to be expended, and what laws I should be called upon to obey?” He will say it is only just and right that he should have that voice. Then, I would ask the opponents of this measure, if they admit this—that it is just and right that a man should have a vote on these grounds—to state on what grounds they refuse it to women. Surely they pay to the taxation of the country the same as men, and are called on to obey the laws? If you tax a woman, does she not pay? If she steals do you not imprison her, and if she murders do you not hang her? On what ground, then, do you deny her the privilege? That is the point. I wish all opponents of the woman’s franchise who have not spoken to deal with this crucial question before they proceed further, because, I think, on that principle

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the whole of the discussion should have been based. I submit they must come to the conclusion that women must be admitted to the franchise the same as men, and for this reason: that you cannot have two forms of justice; you cannot have one applying to men and another to women. I presume it is admitted that justice is a unitary principle, and that you cannot have two forms, and that therefore what is justice for the male must be justice for the female. But the opponents of the measure generally eschew this very simple proposition, and go into what are called side-issues. All the rest I have to say during the time I speak will be with regard to these side-issues, and not the general principle. These side-issues consist in this, really: They say, "We grant the justice of the thing, but we say it is not expedient." Now, immediately you say this, you take up this ground: You disregard the dictates of a high principle lest some part of a lower principle may be infringed. I think this is a very wrong position to take up, and one that never leads to any good. Another side-issue is, that women are intellectually inferior to men. I do not wish to admit that for a moment, but in order to meet the argument I will admit it, for the sake of speaking on it. And I would ask, why is woman's intellect inferior to that of man? What is the cause of it? Surely there must be some cause. I submit we must look for the cause in her environment. How do we rear her? We have got our ideas of women and women's sphere and duties from an Eastern people, thousands of years ago—a people who kept their women muffled up to the eyes and kept them indoors. They showed them a certain amount of respect, but at the same time the most vexatious restrictions were placed on them. I say that that idea of woman has been handed down to us from a distant past, and, with slight modification, we have taken that idea up, and we have told her that the whole limits of her sphere, her empire, lie in the family. We have told her in so many words that her sphere lies in the family, and that any sort of action outside of that is not her function. We have flaunted in her face the teachings of the Pauline epistles; we have warned her off the public platform, and from every public place in which she could open her mouth. We have made her a cook in the kitchen, a drudge in the nursery, or a toy in the drawing-room. We have made her a weakling, in fact, and have then told her she is unfit to take part in outside affairs. That is the way in which we have dealt with our women in the past: and we should not be surprised if she is the child we have made her. I do not say for one moment that the woman just described is not in many respects exceedingly worthy in the more amiable characteristics. No doubt in her home life she has been kind and affectionate, and her kindness had its origin partly from her weakness: indeed, weakness in her at one time was supposed to indicate a certain amount of refinement. At one time it was considered almost vulgar to

be in good health, and to have a stitch at the heart was considered to be proper and lady-like. Well, Sir, that is what I shall call the mediæval type. There have been survivals handed down to a recent period. Now I wish to ask you to look at the modern type. You go out in the street, and you meet a young woman of twenty-one years of age, and she looks into your face with a pair of eyes that fairly blaze into your own. You feel at once that you have to be on the alert to withstand her humorous rillery, and in other ways you have to keep yourself abreast of the conversation that is going on. You feel you have a chance to lose in the contest, in fact: She is as loving to her mother as the older type, as loving to her father, and she cares as much for her brothers and sisters and her home. She is an intellectual being, however, and you can see intellect beaming from her eyes. You can see that her outlook is infinitely broader than her grandmother's was. What is the result? We have to look at her as a new creation—a new type; and it is just this new creation that insists upon coming into our public life. Sir, I maintain that we have got to look at this question from a new standpoint. And now I will tell honourable members how we caught her. Many years ago—nearly fifty years ago—it was found that, in order to keep up our national supremacy, it was necessary to make our boys thorough productive machines, and in order to do that it was found necessary to educate them. The result was that a national system of education was brought into vogue. The National schools were opened, the boy went into the public school, and the girl crept in behind him. She also got into the university, from which we tried to keep her out, but she would not come out, and she is there yet, and intends to stay. The boy and the girl went into the public school, and now the girl comes running out with a certificate stating that she is just as intelligent and as capable in every respect as the boy who went into the school with her. They go home from school: but in five years' time there is a most remarkable change. The boy has now become a very intelligent man. He can take a very intelligent view of every public question, and can express an opinion on what policy the colony should pursue. We are prepared to put him on the electoral roll. But, with regard to woman, according to the arguments of our opponents she has completely declined in her intellectual ability. She has gone back to the original type. It is the most sudden and startling instance of reversion to a primitive type I know of. She is considered to be altogether unworthy to be trusted with any political privilege, and unfit to express an opinion on political affairs. I think this is a most illogical argument, and I confess that honourable members who use it must feel that it is an absurd argument to use, and the only question is, how they can keep their countenance when they utter such opinions. If it is really true that women are deficient in intellectual power, then I say that is—

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN.—Who says so?

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—The argument has been advanced frequently—

An Hon. MEMBER.—No; not in this Council.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—I presume the arguments used in this Council are what honourable members get outside the Council, and although they may not use them in the Council it comes to the same thing. This argument has been frequently advanced outside the Council—

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—And inside the Council, too.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—It is urged that women are not fit to have the franchise because they have not the requisite knowledge of political affairs to enable them to distinguish what is required. I have heard the same thing stated in the Council myself. If that is true, I should like honourable members to consider what is implied by the law of heredity. I do not think that there is anything more certain than the fact that mental and physical peculiarities are transmitted from the parent to the child. Certainly this is a physiological law we cannot evade, and if we do an injustice to woman we are bound to carry the record in our own constitutions. If it is true that woman is indeed deficient in intellectual power, that fact will explain why so many drivelling fools have got into political life. I come now to the question of physical defects. That argument certainly has been used in this Council. It was used by Sir George Whitmore, and by others—namely, that woman was incapable physically—and that she was incapable was proved by the fact that she could not go and defend the country. That argument was dealt with by the Hon. Mr. Oliver and the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, and I do not think it necessary for me to go much into it. If that argument were allowed, then there is no doubt that we should have to do away with the whole of the weak men, the whole of the sick men, and the whole of the aged men. Sir, I venture to say, if the franchise were based on that principle, three-fourths of the members of this Council would be disfranchised to-morrow. And I will just say that, as to the remaining one-fourth, I will take dozens of girls, of the age of twenty-one, in this colony who would enter the lists against the remaining one-fourth, and come out victorious, without soiling their gloves or losing their dignity. It is therefore shown how worthless these objections are, and how foreign to this argument, especially when you depart from a right principle. But, Sir, is it true that women may not be of use in a case of great national danger? I think that is a question which might be considered. Because she does not go to "the Front," it is not necessary to suppose that on that account she would be less serviceable in the event of a great national conflict. I would ask honourable members to think of the Spartan mother who entered the school, took her boy from the bench, put him in the midst of the school, and dedicated him to the war. We cannot conceive how much zeal, how much enthusiasm, how much patriotic fire was in-

fused into the boys of that school by that mother; and it is just this moral force which is so necessary behind the physical to render it effective—moral force, so necessary in every struggle, which can be cultivated in women by education and by political responsibilities. I come now to another point made by the Hon. Sir George Whitmore,—with regard to the affirmation that they were incapable as rulers, and that they have shown themselves to be so. I do not know where he got his data from. Certainly, the number of female rulers in proportion to the number of male rulers has been very small; but, without travelling all over the world, let us just take a look at Great Britain. During the history of that nation we have only had four ruling queens, and three of them, I venture to say, stand forward as having been able administrative rulers. I allude to Elizabeth, Anne, and Victoria. Now, just think of the number of kings, and what they have done. Sir, we all know that Elizabeth ruled England at a time the most critical in the life of the nation. She ruled it with a firm hand. She did her duty, and carried the kingdom through a grave crisis. I will come down now two hundred years, and I will ask honourable members to look at the man who was ruling over England, having the advantage over Elizabeth of two centuries of civilisation. Just look at what he is pictured to be by one of the leading writers of our time. Thackeray, referring to George IV., draws his picture thus:—

"To make a portrait of him at first seemed a matter of small difficulty. There is his coat, his star, his wig, his countenance simpering under it. With a slate and a piece of chalk I could at this very desk perform a recognisable likeness of him. And yet, after reading of him in scores of volumes, hunting him through old magazines and newspapers, having him here at a ball, there at a public dinner, there at races, and so forth, you find you have nothing—nothing but a coat and a wig, and a mask smiling below it—nothing but a great simulacrum. His sire and grandsires were men. One knows what they were like; what they would do in given circumstances: that on occasion they fought and demeaned themselves like tough, good soldiers. They had friends whom they liked according to their natures; enemies whom they hated fiercely; passions, and actions, and individualities of their own. The sailor-king who came after George was a man. The Duke of York was a man, big, burly, loud, jolly, cursing, courageous. But this George, what was he? I look through all his life, and recognise but a bow and a grin. I try and take him to pieces, and find silk stockings, padding, stays, a coat with frogs and a fur collar, a star and blue ribbon, a pocket-handkerchief prodigiously scented, one of Truefitt's best nutty-brown wigs reeking with oil, a set of teeth, and a huge black stock, underwaistcoats, more underwaistcoats, and then nothing."

Sir, that is the description of a King of England two hundred years after Elizabeth. Well, I submit the English people might as

well have put the Crown on the top of a bag of sawdust. But the evil which he created lives to some extent, because the seeds of evil, like bad weeds, have a very tenacious life; but his good was practically nil. Sir, another argument which has been dealt with is, that as woman does not understand politics it would be unwise to grant the franchise to her. In reply to that, I will just read one or two lines from Macaulay. He says,—

“Many politicians of our time are in the habit of laying it down as a self-evident proposition that no people ought to be free till they are fit to use their freedom. The maxim is worthy of the fool in the old story, who resolved not to go into the water till he had learned to swim. If men are to wait for liberty until they are wise and good in slavery they may indeed wait for ever.”

I take it that the argument will be applicable to women as to men. Now, Sir, I come to the remarks of my honourable friend Mr. Bowen. Sir, I confess that the services rendered by the Hon. Mr. Bowen to this colony have been of such a great and such an enduring character, in the shape of national education, that I feel we must all consider very carefully any remarks he may make in this Council; and I am inclined to think we are almost bound, in a cavalierlike style, to humorously grant him any latitude he may be inclined to take on public questions. I confess, however, I could not help thinking that he had gone a little astray when he said he believed that the granting of the political franchise to women would have a disintegrating effect on the family. I feel certain that, if honourable gentlemen in this House, or any men in this colony, or any women in this colony, for one moment supposed that such would be the case, they would immediately say they did not want the franchise to be conferred upon women. But I fail to see how any such disruption of the family as that can take place. I say this: If you want a man that is faithful to his political pledges, that is anxious to do his best for his party, that takes an intelligent view of political questions, that does his duty as a citizen in the best way he can according to his intellect and opportunity, I say you will find that man pays the closest attention to his family, is most careful about the comfort of his children, and loves his wife. On the other hand, if you find a man that does not care about party, that does not care about politics, but is still always speaking about politics, always talking at the street-corners, talking to this party about this thing and to another party about another thing, you can never place any reliance on him. You will find, generally, that that man pays no attention to his family, and takes no interest in their comfort. I believe that would be the case with women, and that, practically, women, if they were to take more interest in politics than they took in their families, would cease then to be politicians; they would cease to be a factor in politics; because they would cease to be women: and therefore, I think the Hon. Mr. Bowen will see, the law of equilibrium comes in

—as soon as they cease to be women they cease to be politicians. I think I hear some one say, “My honourable friend, if you grant the franchise to women you will not have Mr. Bowen’s system of education very long.” That is another argument that has been advanced. Sir, I do not believe it. We have turned out now thousands and thousands of girls from our public schools, who look back with feelings of reverence and love on the school as a second home, a home that they have been trained in in their young days; and I believe that these girls, when they have the responsibilities of voters, and they see anything threatening to break up that school system, if the matter is fully explained to them, will be found to be as staunch supporters of the school system as any one among the men at the present time. I will just draw attention to one very peculiar argument of the opponents of this measure, and that is, that women are too sentimental, that they will be led by the clergy—that they are too sentimental, too emotional, and they will simply be led by the parson. Yet, at the same time, as soon as they are done with that argument they turn round and say that women will be unsexed, will become too masculine, that they will not be women at all. How can these honourable gentlemen reconcile these arguments? Sir, the ways of transgressors are hard, and the arguments of some people are very confused. Another argument is that the ordinary courtesies and decencies of life would not be extended to women if they had political rights. I have heard this argument advanced generally in connection with the tram-cars, and I think it should be called the tram-car argument. It is said, if women have political rights, and any of the sex happen to be standing up in a public tram-car, men will not get up and surrender to them a seat. That is an astonishing position to take up. It practically affirms this: that the courtesy which they have extended to women in the past has been a sham; that they never intended to be courteous; that when they said they would get up and give her a seat with pleasure, they did not mean it at all. Practically they mean that it was a commercial transaction: they offered her a mess of pottage called “courtesy” in exchange for her political birthright, and there was nothing of the element of courtesy and good-feeling about it. But it appears to me, Sir, that this carries a conclusion still further than that—that if a man does an act of courtesy to a woman the benefit of that act is not altogether a gift conferred on her. Does he do nothing to humanise his own character? Simply because woman is given the franchise man will not extend to her ordinary courtesies—will not even give her a seat! That means he will throw overboard the only thing that ennobles and humanises his own miserable self. That is a most remarkable way of getting out of the difficulty, and it is a singular example of the saying, “To cut off one’s nose to spite one’s face.” As to the next objection, that women do not want the franchise, I do not think it necessary to say much about that. I had intended

to say something in reference to the petitions which have been referred to. There was a petition presented last year containing ten thousand names, and this has been accentuated by the presentation of petitions this year containing thirty thousand signatures. I think that should show all reasonable men that the women in the colony do want the franchise. But I maintain it is no matter whether they do or not, it is no matter if only five women in the colony want it, it is no matter if only one woman wants it, and that one is silent. I maintain that it is our duty to grant it, to grant it because it is just that she should have it, and therefore we have no right to refuse this need of justice. Surely honourable members do not contend that they would not grant a man justice simply because he did not recognise his rights. That would be a very peculiar moral idea, but that is actually the case in respect of this argument; and, no matter whether women want the franchise or not, I maintain that it is our bounden duty to grant it because it is just and it is right that they should have it: and then let them make the best use of it they can. I think the lowest form of argument that has been advanced, and it is one which, I am sure, an honourable man would hardly think of using, is the argument that it is likely to disturb political parties in the country. I do not know that any man in this Council has been a hotter political partisan than I have been; but I say this: No man should decide this question from simply a party point of view. It is a question of great moment, and I trust party spirit will be kept out of this, and that it will be judged purely on its merits; and again I ask honourable members to judge it from the standpoint of justice. As to its not being before the country, I think there is very little in that: and I am sure supporters of this measure are deeply indebted to the Hon. Mr. Montgomery for the various instances he has given from the history of England to show how great measures have been passed without having been submitted to the country, but proving in every instance beneficial to the country; and I think we should take advantage of the experience of the Old Country that he has put before us in that respect. But I say this: that we really have had this question before the country. In 1890, before the Atkinson Ministry was dissolved, Sir John Hall brought it forward by resolution in the House, and he then drew special attention to the fact that the elections would be coming on in a very short time, and it was important this question should be put before the country. The elections came, and immediately afterwards came the Bill for granting this privilege to the women. It has been before Parliament for three successive sessions; it has been canvassed in every newspaper in the colony; it has been raised at every by-election; and I consider it is monstrous to say that this question has not been before the country. I have only now to say that I hope the Council will now think that they have done their work in regard to this measure so far as discharging the

Hon. Mr. Bolt

functions of an Upper Chamber is concerned. I think that, if what is required of an Upper Chamber is to see that no large measure of legislation is thrust hastily on the people, then the Council has carried out its functions in that respect excellently, and I do not think we should go any further in that direction. It appears to me that any further opposition on the part of this Council will practically be in opposition to the people. The Council has done its duty. I am not going to enter into any discussion as to how it has done that duty in the past. I have no doubt there are good reasons for everything that has been done. I should have liked to see the Bill passed last session, but I have no doubt the Council had good reasons for the conclusions it came to; but I think the time has now come when the Council should give in its adhesion to a measure which has been three times before Parliament, and I do not think any further opposition would be excusable. For my own part, I may say that I think the fears of honourable members as to the evil results of such a measure are altogether unworthy; because I am sure we all admit that if we want any moral ideal, if we want real honesty of purpose, and so on, we all look to women for it. We admit that they have a higher morality than, perhaps, men, in the rough-and-tumble of life, are able to attain, and therefore I do not think it would be wise of us to apprehend any evil from bringing into the political arena what we practically admit is the higher moral half of the people. I do think that the Council should pass this Bill without any more hesitation, because, in the words of the poet,—

You will lighten the curse of Adam
When you lighten the curse of Eve.

Debate adjourned.

The Council adjourned at ten minutes to five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 23rd August, 1893.

First Readings—Waipa and Puniu Maoris—Martini-Henry Rifles—Education Endowments—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—Adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Otago University Reserve Bill, Kyngdon Land-grant Bill, Gimmerburn Forest Bill, Land Bill, Land for Settlements Bill, Banks and Bankers Bill, Public Trust Office Bill, Tobacco Bill, Land and Income Assessment Bill.

WAIPA AND PUNIU MAORIS.

Mr. LAKE asked, on account of the urgency of the matter, whether the Government were aware that the Maoris on the Waipa and Puniu Rivers had been reduced by the recent floods to absolute want, having lost their crops

and seed for next year; and, if they were aware of it, would they authorise Mr. Wilkinson, the Government Agent, to assist them, either by a grant of potatoes for their immediate necessities, and a further supply for seed, or in such other way as might seem desirable?

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he was not personally aware of the matter, but perhaps his colleague the Native member of the Executive might be aware of it. At any rate, inquiries would be made that evening, and, if the matter was as urgent as the honourable gentleman stated, immediate relief would be afforded.

MARTINI-HENRY RIFLES.

Mr. DUTHIE asked if the Premier had received any word about the Martini-Henry rifles.

Mr. SEDDON said he had received a telegram from the Agent-General to the effect that two hundred had been shipped by the "Tongariro."

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That this House approves of the lands described in the Paper No. 61, laid before this House on the 30th June, being permanently set aside as endowments for education. The motion was necessary to give effect to the return laid on the table as stated in the motion. Honourable members would understand that it was necessary to make certain endowments out of the various lands opened up for settlement and sold during the year, and a return of the lands so set aside had to be laid on the table, in compliance with section 238 of the Land Act, and then it was necessary that the House should by resolution signify its approval of these lands being set aside as endowments. For this purpose, therefore, he moved the resolution.

Dr. NEWMAN would like to ask the Minister of Lands if this was all the land reserved in the Provincial District of Wellington; because it seemed that it was only 270 acres, and that was an exceedingly small quantity for a year in a province which had so much Crown lands for disposal.

Mr. R. THOMPSON thought it was a pity the law could not be altered so that the whole of the education reserves should be brought under the management of the Land Boards. Therefore he hoped that the necessary Bill would be pushed through, because very great dissatisfaction was expressed all over the Province of Auckland at least with reference to the way these reserves were managed. He thought the sooner they were brought under the control and management of the Land Boards the better it would be for the colony.

Mr. J. McKENZIE might say, in reply to the honourable member for the Hutt, that this was not all the land that had been set aside in the Wellington Land District, but it was all the land so far forward as to be in a condition to be gazetted, and consequently the Government could only lay on the table de-

scriptions of such lands as had been gazetted for this purpose. Other reserves would be made in due course, and the House would be asked to approve of them next session. With regard to the remarks of the honourable member for Marsden, the honourable member would find a Bill now on the Order Paper which would give effect to what he wished, if the House would pass it. However, he did not know what the House would do with it. He saw the leader of the Opposition shaking his head very hard at the Bill, and no doubt there would be a considerable amount of opposition to it. The House would, however, deal with it later on.

Mr. BUCHANAN asked whether the honourable gentleman had given attention to the point that the education reserves in the Wellington Provincial District were the best that could be set aside for the purpose.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he, of course, had to trust to the Surveyor-General and the officers of the department as to that matter. He could not possibly examine the land himself as to its suitability or unsuitability for educational endowments, but he would bring the matter before the department.

Motion agreed to.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 8.—Costs and expenses of elections and of taking polls, how to be paid.

Mr. MOORE moved, That all the words after the first word "All" be struck out, with a view of inserting other words.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 86.

Blake	Kapa	Seddon
Buckland	Kelly, W.	Shera
Buick	Lawry	Tanner
Cadman	Mackintosh	Taylor
Carnarross	McGowan	Thompson, R.
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Dawson	McLean	Valentine
Duncan	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Fish	Parata	Willis.
Fisher	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Reeves	Kelly, J.
Houston	Sandford	Smith, E. M.
Hutchison, W.		

NOES, 81.

Allen	Lake	Rollleston
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Stout
Duthie	McGuire	Swan
Earnshaw	Meredith	Taipua
Fergus	Mills, J.	Wilson
Hall	Newman	Wright.
Hamlin	O'Connor	
Harkness	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Rhodes	Hall-Jones
Joyce	Richardson	Moore.

PAIR.
For. Saunders.
Against. Mitchelson.
 Majority for, 5.

Words retained, and clause agreed to.

Clause 10.—Amendment of law as to licenses.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON moved, That subsection (1) [providing that only a widow or a wife having a protection order may hold a license] be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be struck out stand part of the clause."

AYES, 40.

Allen	Kelly, J.	Seddon
Buchanan	Lake	Smith, E. M.
Buick	Lawry	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McGowan	Stout
Carncross	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Carroll	McLean	Taylor
Dawson	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Duthie	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	Ward
Hall-Jones	Moore	Willis.
Hogg	Newman	
Houston	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Reeves	Fish
Joyce	Sandford	Mills, J.

NOES, 25.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Rolleston
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Buckland	Mackenzie, T.	Shera
Fergus	Mackintosh	Swan
Fisher	McGuire	Wilson.
Fraser	O'Connor	
Hall	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Rhodes	Duncan
Hutchison, G.	Richardson	Wright.

Majority for, 15.

Amendment negatived, and subsection (1) retained.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON moved, That subsection (5) [providing that during hours when licensed premises are closed windows of public bars shall be kept unscreened] be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 30.

Buchanan	Lake	Russell
Buick	Mackintosh	Sandford
Carncross	McGowan	Seddon
Duthie	McLean	Smith, E. M.
Earnshaw	Meredith	Stout
Hall	Mitchelson	Taipua
Hall-Jones	Moore	Wright.
Harkness	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	O'Connor	Houston
Joyce	Pinkerton	Tanner.
Kelly, J.		

NOES, 32.

Allen	Cadman	Fraser
Blake	Dawson	Hogg
Bruce	Duncan	Kelly, W.
Buckland	Fisher	Lawry

Mackenzie, T.	Rolleston	Valentine
McGuire	Shera	Ward
Mills, C. H.	Smith, W. C.	Willis
Mills, J.	Swan	Wilson.
Parata	Taylor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Rhodes	Thompson, R.	Fish
Richardson	Thompson, T.	Hutchison, G.

Majority against, 2.

Subsection struck out.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON moved, That the first line of subsection (7) [providing that a licensee shall have a right to renewal of the license for two years after original grant] be omitted, with a view of striking out the whole subsection.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 37.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Seddon
Bruce	Lawry	Shera
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Buckland	Mackintosh	Swan
Cadman	McGuire	Taylor
Carncross	McGowan	Thompson, T.
Dawson	McLean	Valentine
Duncan	Mills, J.	Ward
Duthie	Parata	Wilson.
Fisher	Reeves	
Fraser	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Richardson	Fish
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Mills, C. H.

NOES, 22.

Allen	Lake	Stout
Buick	Mackenzie, M.	Taipua
Hall	Meredith	Tanner
Hall-Jones	Newman	Thompson, R.
Hamlin	Palmer	
Houston	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	Earnshaw
Kelly, J.	Smith, W. C.	Wright.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll	Harkness
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Russell.	Fergus.

Majority for, 15.

Words retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the word "shall" be struck out, with the view of inserting "may" in lieu thereof.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 36.

Bruce	Fraser	McLean
Buchanan	Hogg	Mills, C. H.
Buckland	Hutchison, G.	Mills, J.
Cadman	Kelly, W.	O'Connor
Carncross	Lawry	Parata
Dawson	Mackintosh	Reeves
Duncan	McGuire	Rhodes
Duthie	McGowan	Richardson
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Rolleston

Seddon	Taylor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Shera	Thompson, T.	Blake
Smith, E. M.	Ward.	Fish.
Swan		

NOES, 26.

Allen	Joyce	Stout
Buick	Lake	Taipua
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, R.
Hall	Mackenzie, T.	Willis
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Wilson
Hamlin	Palmer	Wright.
Harkness	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Sandford	Kelly, J.
Hutchison, W.	Smith, W. C.	Tanner.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll.	Fergus.

Majority for, 10.

Word retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words "subsections one to four of" be struck out of the following paragraph in subsection (7): "In any such case, or if any objection under subsections one to four of section eighty-one of the principal Act be made," &c.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 58.

Allen	Lawry	Rolleston
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Sandford
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Buchanan	Mackintosh	Shera
Buick	McGuire	Smith, E. M.
Cadman	McGowan	Swan
Dawson	McKenzie, J.	Tanner
Duncan	McLean	Taylor
Duthie	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, R.
Fish	Mills, J.	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fraser	Moore	Ward
Hogg	Newman	Willis
Houston	O'Connor	Wilson
Hutchison, G.	Parata	Wright.
Kelly, J.	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, W.	Rhodes	Buckland
Lake	Richardson	Carncross.

NOES, 11.

Earnshaw	Kapa	Taipua.
Hall-Jones	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hamlin	Pinkerton	Harkness
Joyce	Stout	Meredith.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll.	Fergus.

Majority for, 42.

Words retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the following proviso be added to subsection (7): "Provided always that this subsection shall be inoperative unless a majority of the poll under this Act shall have voted that the present number of licenses shall be continued."

The Committee divided,

AYES, 81.

Bruce	Joyce	Rhodes
Buick	Kapa	Rolleston
Duthie	Lake	Shera
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, M.	Stout
Hall	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Hall-Jones	McGuire	Wilson
Hamlin	Meredith	Wright.
Harkness	Mitchelson	
Houston	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Newman	Allen
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	Mills, J.

NOES, 36.

Blake	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Buchanan	McKenzie, J.	Swan
Cadman	McLean	Tanner
Carncross	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Dawson	O'Connor	Thompson, R.
Duncan	Parata	Thompson, T.
Fisher	Reeves	Valentine
Fraser	Richardson	Ward
Hogg	Russell	Willis.
Kelly, J.	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, W.	Seddon	Buckland
Lawry	Smith, E. M.	Fish.
Mackintosh		

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Fergus.	Carroll.

Majority against, 5.

Amendment negatived.

The Committee divided on the question, "That clause 10 stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 49.

Allen	Kelly, J.	Russell
Blake	Kelly, W.	Seddon
Bruce	Lake	Shera
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Buckland	Mackintosh	Smith, W. C.
Buick	McGuire	Swan
Cadman	McGowan	Taylor
Carncross	McLean	Thompson, R.
Dawson	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Duncan	Mitchelson	Valentine
Duthie	Moore	Ward
Fish	Parata	Willis
Fraser	Pinkerton	Wilson.
Hall	Reeves	
Hogg	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Richardson	Fisher
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Lawry.

NOES, 13.

Hall-Jones	Newman	Wright.
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	
Kapa	Stout	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackenzie, M.	Taipua	Earnshaw
Meredith	Tanner	Harkness.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carroll	Fergus
McKenzie, J.	Joyce.

Majority for, 36.

Clause retained.

Clause 11.—No increase of licenses to be allowed until after the taking of the then next census.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words, "the then next census," be struck out, with the view of inserting "the poll under this Act."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 52.

Allen	Lawry	Sandford
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Seddon
Bruce	Mackintosh	Shera
Buchanan	McGuire	Smith, E. M.
Buick	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McLean	Swan
Carncross	Meredith	Tanner
Dawson	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Duncan	Moore	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Newman	Thompson, T.
Fraser	O'Connor	Valentine
Hogg	Parata	Ward
Houston	Pinkerton	Willis
Hutchison, G.	Reeves	Wilson.
Hutchison, W.	Rhodes	
Kelly, J.	Richardson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, W.	Rolleston	Buckland
Lake	Russell	Fish.

NOES, 11.

Duthie	Mackenzie, T.	Wright.
Hall-Jones	Mills, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Mitchelson	Earnshaw
Kapa	Taipua	Stout.

PAIRS.

For. *Against.*

Carroll Fergus
McKenzie, J. Joyce.

Majority for, 41.

Amendment negatived.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the words "three-fifths in number of" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 51.

Allen	Lawry	Russell
Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Sandford
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Buchanan	Mackintosh	Shera
Buckland	McGuire	Smith, E. M.
Cadman	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Carncross	McLean	Swan
Dawson	Meredith	Taylor
Duncan	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, R.
Duthie	Mitchelson	Thompson, T.
Fish	Moore	Valentine
Fraser	O'Connor	Ward
Hogg	Parata	Willis
Houston	Reeves	Wilson.
Hutchison, W.	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Richardson	Fisher
Kelly, W.	Rolleston	Hutchison, G.
Lake		

NOES, 11.

Buick	Newman	Tanner.
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Stout	Earnshaw
Kapa	Taipua	Wright.

PAIRS.

For. *Against.*
Carroll Fergus
McKenzie, J. Joyce.

Majority for, 40.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 13.—Returning Officer to appoint day for taking poll.

Sir R. STOUT moved, That the word "Governor" be substituted for "Returning Officer."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 37.

Blake	Kelly	Shera
Buchanan	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Buckland	Mackintosh	Swan
Buick	McGowan	Tanner
Cadman	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Carncross	Parata	Thompson, T.
Carroll	Pinkerton	Valentine
Dawson	Reeves	Ward
Duncan	Richardson	Willis.
Fish	Rolleston	
Fisher	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fraser	Sandford	Hogg
Houston	Seddon	McLean.

NOES, 24.

Allen	Lake	Rhodes
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Smith, W. C.
Duthie	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Earnshaw	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Fergus	Mitchelson	Wilson.
Hall-Jones	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Newman	Palmer
Hutchison, G.	O'Connor	Stout.
Kapa		

PAIRS.

For. *Against.*
Kelly, W. Wright
McKenzie, J. Joyce.

Majority for, 13.

Amendment negatived, and words retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved an amendment to the effect that a day for the general election should be appointed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Bruce	Mackintosh	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duncan	O'Connor	Fergus
Earnshaw	Stout	Harkness.
Hall-Jones	Taipua.	

NOES, 51.

Allen	Fisher	McGowan
Blake	Fraser	McLean
Buchanan	Hogg	Meredith
Buckland	Houston	Mitchelson
Buick	Hutchison, G.	Moore
Cadman	Hutchison, W.	Newman
Carncross	Kelly, J.	Palmer
Carroll	Lake	Parata
Dawson	Lawry	Pinkerton
Duthie	Mackenzie, M.	Reeves
Fish	Mackenzie, T.	Rhodes

Richardson	Smith, W. C.	Ward
Rolleston	Swan	Willis
Russell	Taylor	Wilson.
Sandford	Thompson, R.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Seddon	Thompson, T.	Mills, C. H.
Shera	Valentine	Tanner.
Smith, E. M.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Joyce	McKenzie, J.
Wright.	Kelly, W.

Majority against, 41.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 15.—Sir R. STOUT moved, That the word "three-fifths," in subsection (3), be struck out

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 48.

Allen	Kelly, J.	Russell
Blake	Lake	Sandford
Bruce	Lawry	Seddon
Buchanan	Mackenzie, M.	Shera
Buckland	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Buick	Mackintosh	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McGowan	Swan
Carncross	McLean	Taylor
Carroll	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Dawson	Moore	Thompson, T.
Duthie	O'Connor	Valentine
Fergus	Parata	Willis
Fish	Reeves	Wilson.
Fraser	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Richardson	Duncan
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Mills, C. H.
Kapa		

NOES, 10.

Fisher	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Pinkerton	Hall-Jones
Hutchison, W.	Stout	Harkness.
Meredith	Tanner.	

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Kelly, W.	Wright
Ward.	Earnshaw.

Majority for, 38.

Word retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved to strike out the words embracing a provision that the poll shall be null and void if one-half of the total number of votes on the roll be not recorded at the poll.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 40.

Blake	Duncan	Mackenzie, M.
Bruce	Duthie	Mackenzie, T.
Buchanan	Fish	Mackintosh
Buckland	Fraser	McGowan
Cadman	Hogg	McLean
Carncross	Houston	Mills, C. H.
Carroll	Hutchison, G.	Mitchelson
Dawson	Lawry	O'Connor

Parata	Seddon	Valentine
Reeves	Shera	Willis.
Rhodes	Smith, W. C.	
Richardson	Swan	<i>Tellers.</i>
Rolleston	Taylor	Smith, E. M.
Russell	Thompson, R.	Thompson, T.

NOES, 17.

Allen	Kelly, J.	Sandford
Buick	Lake	Stout
Fergus	Meredith	Wilson.
Fisher	Mills, J.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Moore	Newman
Harkness	Pinkerton	Tanner.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Kelly, W.	Wright
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Ward.	Earnshaw.

Majority for, 23.

Words retained.

Mr. SANDFORD moved, That the word "one-half" be struck out, with the view of inserting "two-fifths."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 36.

Blake	Hutchison, G.	Seddon
Bruce	Lawry	Shera
Buchanan	Mackenzie M.	Smith, E. M.
Buckland	Mackintosh	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McGowan	Swan
Carncross	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Carroll	Parata	Thompson, T.
Dawson	Reeves	Valentine
Duncan	Rhodes	Willis.
Fergus	Richardson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Rolleston	Fraser
Hogg	Russell	Thompson, R.
Houston		

NOES, 20.

Buick	Mackenzie, T.	Pinkerton
Fisher	McLean	Stout
Hall-Jones	Meredith	Tanner
Harkness	Mills, J.	Wilson.
Hutchison, W.	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Moore	Allen
Lake	Newman	Sandford.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Kelly, W.	Wright
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Ward.	Earnshaw.

Majority for, 16.

Word retained.

Sir R. STOUT moved to strike out the words providing that the licenses shall continue as before if one-half of the total number of electors do not vote.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 48.

Blake	Kelly, J.	Russell
Buchanan	Lake	Sandford
Buckland	Lawry	Seddon
Cadman	Mackenzie, M.	Shera
Carncross	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	Mackintosh	Swan
Dawson	McGowan	Taylor
Duncan	McLean	Thompson, T.
Duthie	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fish	Moore	Willis
Fisher	Parata	Wilson.
Fraser	Reeves	
Hogg	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Richardson	Mills, C. H.
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Tanner.

NOES, 18.

Allen	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Mills, J.	
Hall-Jones	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Harkness	Pinkerton	Buick
Hutchison, W.	Smith, W. C.	Stout.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Kelly, W.	Wright
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Ward.	Earnshaw.

Majority for, 30.

Words retained.

Mr. SEDDON moved to strike out the provision in clause 16 providing for the refusal of those licenses which have been indorsed for selling liquors during prohibited hours on any days other than Sunday.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 16.

Allen	Hutchison, W.	Stout
Bruce	Lake	Tanner.
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	
Buick	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Mitchelson	Harkness
Hall-Jones	Rolleston	Sandford.

NOES, 82.

Blake	Lawry	Shera
Buckland	McGowan	Swan
Cadman	McLean	Tanner
Carncross	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Dawson	Moore	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Parata	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Reeves	Valentine
Hogg	Rhodes	Willis.
Houston	Richardson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Russell	Fish
Kelly, J.	Seddon	Mills, J.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Kelly, W.	Wright
McKenzie, J.	Joyce
Ward.	Earnshaw.

Majority against, 16.

Words struck out.
Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

On the question, That this House do now adjourn,

Mr. MOORE wished to know from the Premier whether he expected the Committees to meet that morning at half-past ten.

Mr. SEDDON said it was a matter entirely for the Committees themselves.

Mr. MOORE would point out that the Premier had generally been courteous enough to arrange, on other occasions when they left at an early hour of the morning like that, as to whether the Committees should meet or not.

Mr. SPEAKER said it was impossible for the Premier to do what the honourable gentleman suggested.

Mr. MOORE said the Premier had generally given an intimation to the House, at any rate.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said it was undesirable the Select Committees should not meet. His engagements on Committees for that day were very important. He might say they could only blame the Premier for keeping them there so late.

Mr. SEDDON said the principal speaker, who had kept them there for three-quarters of an hour, was the honourable member for Waitotara. That was the honourable member who was to blame, and his action was without any good grounds or reasons whatsoever.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON wished to make a personal explanation in respect to what the Premier had just said, charging him having been the cause of detaining the Committee for the last three-quarters of an hour. He resented that imputation. It was the Premier who was to blame. He (Mr. Hutchison) had been opposing the passing of an addition to a clause which the Premier had introduced in Committee, but of which they had no proper notice, and which, as read from the table, meant nonsense so far as the rest of the clause was concerned.

Mr. FISH must indorse the explanation made by the honourable member for Waitotara. That honourable gentleman certainly did not delay the business for three-quarters of an hour; he thought it was only forty minutes. He did not think anybody was particularly to blame for the lateness of the hour. Considerably good and important work had been done in the hours they had been sitting, and the Premier had succeeded in getting through more work than any other gentleman in the same position would have done.

Mr. BUCHANAN said various reasons had been given for the delay that had taken place. Might he suggest that the real cause of the delay was that the Premier had asked the Committee to do too much? The House had got past its working-point; any one coming into the House within the last hour could easily see that. He hoped the Premier would take the lesson, and would not again attempt the impossible. If they had adjourned an hour and a half ago he was certain the business would be much further forward.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE indorsed the remark of the honourable member for Wairarapa that they had been driven too hard. They ought not to be kept there night after night till that time.

Mr. VALENTINE thought the honourable member for Kaiapoi had struck the point at issue when he asked the Premier whether he would not make some motion in regard to the Committees. The Premier said now he could not do it. A few evenings ago, however, the Premier had said, when they were considering that Bill, that if the Committee would consent to go on he would move that Select Committees should not sit the following day. The fact of the matter was, the Premier had not the power to make any alteration in regard to the meetings of the Committees. On account of the lateness of the hour, he thought they were entitled to some consideration, and that by general consent the Committees might forego sitting. The Premier had no power to dictate to them whether they were to meet or not.

Mr. LAKE said the delay that had taken place in the business was on account of the shipshod condition in which the Bill had been brought down.

At this stage the electric light suddenly went out, leaving the chamber in darkness. Lighted candles having been brought in,

Mr. SEDDON said he was very sorry this had happened, and he would make inquiries into it in the morning.

Mr. SPEAKER also said the matter would be looked into.

Mr. LAKE, continuing, said that, as to the charges by the Premier about the unnecessary delay that had taken place in dealing with the Bill, the real delay was due to the fact that the Bill had been brought down on a series of Supplementary Order Papers: that was the reason, he thought, that not much progress had been made.

Mr. FERGUS suggested that the Premier might give the House some indication as to how the sittings of the Committees could be dispensed with next morning.

Mr. SEDDON said it was impossible for the Government to do so.

Mr. FERGUS thought there should be some sort of a general understanding that the Committee meetings would lapse that day.

Mr. RICHARDSON said it would be impossible for members to attend to their duties on Select Committees that day, and he thought there should be an understanding that members would be relieved from those duties.

Mr. SEDDON, first of all, must express very much regret that in the midst of their deliberations the lights should have gone out. Steps would be taken which would prevent a recurrence of that. Then, he would say that it was very unusual, when the House met, to have a discussion as to what had taken place in Committee. In fact, it was against the rules of procedure to discuss what had occurred in Committee.

Mr. RHODES.—You commenced it yourself.

Mr. SEDDON said he had done nothing of the kind. The honourable gentleman should not make such statements. Over an hour ago he had agreed to report progress when a clause of the Bill had been passed; but members did not feel inclined to report progress, and the business was kept going. It was over half an hour since they came out of Committee, and members did not feel inclined to go home. One member after another had got up and spoken to the question of adjournment. The Government could not interfere with the meetings of Committees, although the procedure in the past had been that after a late sitting the Committees had not met.

The House divided on the question, "That this House do now adjourn."

AYES, 25.

Bruce	Lawry	Tanner
Buchanan	McLean	Taylor
Buick	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Carncross	Moore	Valentine
Dawson	Parata	Willis.
Duncan	Reeves	
Fraser	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Rolleston	Guinness
Lake	Seddon	Joyce.

NOES, 8.

Allen	Hall-Jones	<i>Tellers.</i>
Blake	Mackenzie, T.	Hutchison, G.
Buckland	Mills, J.	Richardson.
	Majority for, 17.	

The House adjourned at a quarter to four o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 24th August, 1898.

Curnin's Index of Statutes—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

CURNIN'S INDEX OF STATUTES.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK asked the Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Whether the Government will cause a copy of the next revision of Curnin's Index to the Statutes to be distributed to each member of the General Assembly? If the publication were distributed amongst honourable members it would be far more useful than many other publications that were now distributed.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said this index was the private property of Mr. Curnin, and whenever a new edition was issued the Government made arrangements to take a certain number of copies. The cost was very small—about 7s. 6d. each. He believed the next one would not be issued for about two years, and he was afraid he could not give the honourable gentleman what he wanted.

ELECTORAL BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—It is well known that I am a very strong advocate of the enfranchisement of woman, and that I have been so ever since the question became one of practical importance in this colony. The subject, I think, has been before the other branch of the Legislature for the last fourteen years. In 1879, Dr. Wallis, then one of the Auckland members, advocated the claims of women with great force and eloquence. Since then the question has been before the country at the different elections; but during the last five or six years it has assumed almost burning importance. We in this branch of the Legislature have had the subject under consideration on more than one occasion, and I think it is a matter for profound regret that this enlargement of the franchise did not become law last session. The genius of this age is one in favour of equality and liberty, and I have no hesitation in saying that, although some honourable members may succeed in defeating this measure, it is only a question of time whether it will be made law during this Parliament or the next. It is, at most, simply a question of delay. What we have to consider really is, as some honourable members have previously pointed out, Why has woman been excluded from the franchise? This arose from a curious historical state of circumstances. We know that in England the feudal system prevailed to such an extent that military service was looked upon practically as the one qualification for the ordinary rights of citizenship, and women were not supposed to be able to render that service. Then, we have the further reason that up to a comparatively recent period, and to a great extent in England, property in one form or another was the sole qualification for the right of voting. Now we have adopted in this colony what is termed "manhood suffrage": that is to say, every person over twenty-one years of age, subject to certain conditions, is entitled to exercise the franchise. That being conceded, it seems to me to follow almost as a corollary that, as men have this privilege, it should be extended to women. If it were a property qualification we were to be governed by, I admit it might be contended that only those women who have property should be represented; but we have gone beyond that, following in the lines of other colonies, and have given manhood suffrage. I see no reason whatever, therefore, why we should not extend that principle to women. During the last twenty-five or thirty years nothing has been more noticeable in the history of the various countries in the British dominions than the very remarkable progress which has been made in the position of women from a legal point of view, from a social point of view, from an educational point of view, and also from an economic point of view; and to deny women the right to vote seems to me to amount to a very great and illogical piece of injustice. We know perfectly well that our Universities were closed against

them, and that now they are practically open to them. This has been more particularly the case of recent years in the Scottish Universities, also in the London University, and in some measure to other Universities in the United Kingdom. Then, within the Isle of Man, since the year 1880 women have been entitled to vote for members of the Legislature, and I believe the legislation there has been very satisfactory. Then, we have this old story of the State of Wyoming referred to, and I think, Sir, we have had sufficient proof during this debate that the extension of the franchise to women there has been a very marked success. To recapitulate anything that had been said would only be attempting to paint the lily; but I wish to allude to what the Hon. Mr. Montgomery said yesterday when he read part of an article in *Harper's Magazine* dealing with this question. It is contended that women will only vote as their husbands ask them. A gentleman who visited that State quite recently says this:—

"I found that a great majority of the women in Wyoming are in the habit of voting. Not all of them vote as their husbands do, and, as one official expressed himself, 'Good men pride themselves upon not influencing their wives.' Yet it is true, I am told, that very many women, of their own volition and unconsciously, copy the politics of their husbands. Occasionally the men of the State hear of women who refuse to embrace the privilege—who do not believe that woman should meddle in affairs which concern the homes, the prosperity, and the self-respect and credit of the communities of which they are a part—but such women are, of course, few."

We have in England women on the Boards of Education, and I believe their accession to those Boards has been marked with very considerable satisfaction. They have also the right to vote in connection with County Councils; and we know that the presence of women upon Boards of Guardians is not only hailed with great satisfaction, but has been attended with a remarkable amount of good. The objections to this movement are very vague, and I think no objection of a substantial character has been urged during this debate. It has been urged that we should defer the question of the enfranchisement of women until the next Parliament. I submit that, constitutionally, this question affects very directly and immediately the other branch of the Legislature, and that branch has on several occasions emphatically pronounced its opinion in favour of woman suffrage, so that I do not think it will be wise on the part of this branch of the Legislature to further intercept this movement. It has been said by certain honourable gentlemen who have spoken that some honourable members who have been recently added to this Chamber show their wisdom in acting on their own individual feelings. This may be very true with regard to a question that has not been before the country, and which might have come before this branch of the Legislature for the first time; but we know perfectly well this Bill

is a policy Bill of the Government, that it was a Bill introduced on more than one occasion as a policy measure of the Government, and that one reason why those honourable gentlemen are here to-day is that they are supposed to be prepared to give effect to the wishes of the other branch of the Legislature.

Hon. MEMBERS.—No.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—Sir, the alleged reason why some honourable gentlemen were appointed to this Council was that the Government were unable to carry their policy measures, and they found it necessary to make further additions to the Council; and we find that some of those very honourable gentlemen, who were appointed by the Government to defend in this branch of the Legislature the measures of the Government, are going to vote against this measure. Something has already been said about these appointments or I would not have introduced the question. It has been introduced by the Hon. Mr. Campbell Walker, who, instead of supporting the Government, practically sits in judgment upon them. He tells them they are entirely wrong. He states that the late Premier was entirely mistaken on this question: yet, although the Ministry were defeated on this question last session, the Ministry send the honourable gentleman here to kill the Bill this session. That is the argument of the honourable gentleman. Now, I appeal to those honourable members. I say that, if this Bill is defeated in the Legislature this year, there will be such a commotion in the colony against the present Government, and against this branch of the Legislature, as has never been witnessed before.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I rise to a point of order, Sir. I do not think the honourable gentleman should be allowed to intimidate honourable members as to the direction in which they should vote.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I am merely commenting upon what has taken place here recently; and, if honourable members choose to raise the question of their convictions, they are at perfect liberty to do so. What I submit is this: Those honourable gentlemen were sent here to carry out the then declared policy of the Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—If not, then all I can say is that those memoranda and despatches between the Governor and the Secretary of State had no meaning at all. The views of every member of this Council were strictly examined, and it was declared that the Government were in a minority, and that they were unable to carry the measures they thought necessary; and certain honourable members were appointed to carry out those measures, and one of those measures was the woman's franchise.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—It was to get their measures discussed.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—Yes; it was said their measures were not even discussed. The position now is this: The Govern-

ment bring forward a measure, which they were unable to carry, and they appoint certain members to this branch of the Legislature for the purpose of carrying those measures, and the result is that those honourable gentlemen appointed by the Government to carry this measure not only vote against it, but speak against it.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY.—I wish the honourable gentleman would discuss the merits of the Bill. As for the duties of members in this Chamber, I thought that rested with the members themselves.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I am sorry to see that those honourable gentlemen are so sensitive on this question. They are apparently very anxious to burke the disclosure of the real facts.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—I must ask you, Sir, if that is proper language to use towards a fellow-member here.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is in order.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—The honourable gentleman must allow free discussion here, so long as the Standing Orders are not violated. I think there is too much mook-sentimentality over this question, and I say that this measure is not to be defeated by any subterfuge or any attempt to burke discussion. We have been informed by the Hon. Mr. Walker that it is the duty of this Council to act in a judicial capacity, and I perfectly agree with him; but the honourable gentleman, when proceeding to discharge his duty in this judicial capacity, states that the Ministry are divided on this question, and that, though the country is in favour of it, he will hold to the opinion he has held for many years, and will not vote for it on this occasion.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.—What I said was that the Ministry were divided on the question practically, and that the country was, practically, divided on the question, and I also said that the majority were against the franchise being extended in this direction, and therefore I said the Council were perfectly justified in maintaining their privilege of judicially examining the question and sending it back to the constituencies.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—The honourable gentleman emphasized the fact that his opinion was always against the measure, and said he would stick to that opinion.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.—I wish to say that I have been always consistent in voting in the direction I now intend to vote in. Therefore the Government, in appointing me, knew very well what my opinions were on the subject.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I do not know whether the Government knew of the honourable gentleman's opinion, or whether he is very sure of it himself. All I know is that the honourable gentleman stated that on previous occasions he voted against this measure, and that, practically irrespective of all considerations, he intended to do the same on the present occasion. It has been stated by the Hon.

Mr. Bowen, in a very eloquent and able speech against this measure, that it would reduce women to a contemptible state in society, and that it was their duty to attend to those more refined departments of life for which Nature had fitted them. I ask honourable members to bear this in mind: that if men were prepared to support women and to keep them in that state to which the honourable gentleman referred, one could very well understand that there might be some measure of truth in his argument. But what do we find? We find that women in all countries, and especially in this country, are obliged to enter into the active business of life and obtain their livelihood as best they may. Thousands and thousands of women who have not the privilege we should like to see extended to them are obliged to earn their own living in the best way they can. I submit, therefore, that, whilst this responsibility is thrown upon them, whilst they are obliged to submit to our laws and to our taxation, and to perform the ordinary duties of citizens, they ought undoubtedly to be allowed to exercise the rights of citizenship and vote. I see no reason whatever why we should wait until some other country adopts this principle. This colony is free from many complications which exist in other countries, especially so in the Old Country. We know there are many questions of burning importance now being agitated there. Notwithstanding that fact, this question has been very fully discussed in the House of Commons, and has been carried there by a large majority, and has also received very favourable attention in the House of Lords, which is, perhaps, one of the most Conservative bodies in the world. The question now comes before this Council as a practical one, and I wish to place before the Council the very strong demand for this reform throughout the country, especially in all those centres of population where women are able to gather together and discuss these questions and express their opinions. The fact that there has been no active movement in what may be termed sparsely-populated parts of the colony is no argument against this reform. The argument has been brought forward that, logically, if women are entitled to vote, they ought to be admitted to the Legislature. This is based upon an entire fallacy. Judges are not qualified to sit in Parliament, nor are Civil servants, nor, in England, are clergymen; yet they are entitled to vote. And there are many classes of the community who are entitled to exercise the franchise, but who are not eligible to sit in either branch of the Legislature. But, assuming there is anything in the argument—and so far, at any rate, women have not expressed any desire to sit in Parliament—I do not think there is any real objection to their doing so. If it is desirable that woman should come into this Legislature, I see no reason why they should not. What I wish to point out is that the argument that, because they wish to have a right to vote, logically they are entitled to sit in the Legislature applies to many other members of

the community who are not entitled to sit. The truth is that you cannot in politics drive any principle to its logical conclusion. The franchise seems to be a question not of right but of expediency. This is illustrated by the fact that we disqualify persons who are convicted of crime; and in many States of America persons who are unable to read or to write are not allowed to vote—in some States because they are unable to read, and in other States because they are unable to write. It is purely a question of expediency from that point of view. The Legislature has determined what is proper to be conceded, and what I submit is that, if men are to be allowed to have this privilege, intelligent women are also entitled to have the franchise. I shall not detain the Council further than by exploring it to seriously consider the consequences of refusing this Bill. The colony is ripe for it, the demand is pressing, is increasing, and it will have to be satisfied now or at no distant date. Whilst some honourable members may succeed in delaying this measure, as surely as the sun rises women will be admitted to the franchise. I therefore very heartily support that portion of the Bill enfranchising women.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, when any member of the Legislature has nothing new to add to the discussion, but nevertheless desires to make a speech, he generally excuses himself by saying he is unwilling to give a silent vote upon the important question. That is exactly my present position. I have nothing new to say upon this very well-discussed proposal; but, if I am compelled to repeat arguments that have been used in favour of it, I think I may be able to put these arguments in a different manner, and to place the claims of the women to the franchise in a softer light than that in which they appear in the speeches of those honourable gentlemen we have heard in opposition to those claims. Sir, the Bill which is the subject of the motion of my honourable and learned friend the Attorney-General is in its main features simply a consolidating Act—a Bill consolidating a number of laws specified in one of the schedules to the Bill, and which have been passed from time to time for the purpose of regulating elections. About the question of the second reading of this Bill there need be no discussion. It must be read a second time, whatever may happen in Committee when the clauses are discussed. It is mainly, as I have said, a machinery Bill. What is new in it altogether is the provision giving the franchise, or extending the electoral franchise, to women, but at the same time debarring them from the privilege which that franchise confers of obtaining a seat in the Legislature of the colony. The only other important provision is that which relates to the "one man one vote." Although I have nothing very new to say, I think it worth while on this occasion to repeat my catechism, and to make a confession of the faith on which my advocacy of women's rights in this matter is

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founded. Sir, it is the shibboleth of constitutional freedom that there shall be no taxation without representation. I want to know why a woman who holds property, and is subject to the payment of rates and taxes, should be debarred from the privilege of exercising her right and of selecting the representative who has the power of placing those burdens upon her. I want to know why the women who are competing with our male friends for honours in the University should be debarred from the exercise of the electoral privilege. I was myself, two or three years ago, nominated by His Excellency the Governor to be the graduates' representative on the Auckland University College Council. At the end of my term of office the graduates on the rolls of the University had become sufficiently numerous to give to the graduates the privilege of choosing their own representative, which the law allowed. What did these learned and intelligent men do in that case? What kind of representative did they elect when that right was conceded to them? Why, a woman; a lady who had graduated with honours in the University was put in the place I occupied, and she occupies that position now acceptably, and gives much more valuable service to the University than I could possibly have rendered. Sir, we confide the education of our children to women who are employed by the Education Boards under the Act, and yet we refuse to consider them as worthy of exercising the franchise. We have practically abolished property qualification. The qualification for the franchise is now a residential one, as my honourable friend opposite (the Hon. Mr. Bolt) showed very forcibly yesterday. I want to know why, property qualification being abolished, and the sexes being equal in the eye of the law in regard to residential qualification, they should not have an equal voice in the selection of those persons who have to make the laws which all alike are bound to know and obey. There is no possible answer to this question which will justify such disqualification. Time was, as far as I am concerned, when it would have given me pleasure to reply seriatim to the objections of honourable members who have spoken in opposition to this question, and to answer seriatim to the objections they have made; but my debating-powers are now a vanishing quantity, and I am obliged to husband what remains. I must content myself on this occasion with short reference not to all the objections made, but to one or two. The objections are mainly those of an academic and sentimental character, so eloquently urged by the Hon. Mr. Bowen, who, I regret to see, is not in his place: the other objections, I take it, are mainly of a practical character, and to those I propose to address myself. They are mainly two: first, that this is not the time for this change. This is the popular fallacy of "Wait-a-bit" which Bentham, in his book, has exposed, and which Sydney Smith ridiculed in his Noodle's Oration. If the time has come when it is right and proper for the change to be made, then it should be done

now, and not three years hence as proposed and intended by the opponents of this measure. With respect to the other objection,—that the voice of the country has not been heard on this subject,—I understand that the voice of the country is expressed by its representatives. That voice has been already heard three times in this Parliament. Three times has the measure been sent up to this Council, and the whole question has been before the electors during that time: if there had been any objections of a serious character, these representatives would have heard it, and have had the opportunity of considering it. They have been in touch with their constituents all that time. But, Sir, I think that, if there is any further doubt that this Parliament truly represents popular opinion on this point, this fact will remove it: Ministers have imposed upon themselves the task of educating the people of this colony by addresses delivered in all centres of population on what is vulgarly termed "the stump." Upon every platform in this colony during the recent recess Ministers have been taken to task everywhere for the delay which has taken place in the bringing of the woman's franchise into operation. What was the apology? They endeavoured to excuse themselves by throwing the blame for this delay upon this Legislative Council. A bad excuse is better than none, but it is impossible to conceive a more paltry, a more disingenuous excuse than that. The right of women to the franchise has been affirmed over and over again by this Council. It was affirmed again on the last occasion by a large majority; and the Bill was lost not because of the action of the Council, but because of the action outside this Council of the party who did not want the Bill at all. Another excuse which Ministers offered for their *laches* in this respect was that they felt it their duty to resist the amendments which the Council proposed to make in the Bill, on the ground that the secrecy of the ballot would be seriously imperilled. The secrecy of the ballot! A myth,—pure cant. Why, Sir, there is nothing of the kind. It is the thinnest and most transparent of shams. There is no secrecy in the ballot, as every one knows who has had any practical acquaintance with the business of electioneering in this colony. Even now, on every occasion, there is an exhaustive canvass of a district, and everybody is asked how he is going to vote. Electoral rolls are made up in every committee-room, on which each name will be found to be ticked off, "for," "against," "doubtful." The majority of men are honest, and observe their plighted word; and the way in which three-fourths of the electors will vote upon any particular occasion is as well known as if their voices were given and their votes posted on the market cloth. There is a small minority who are ready to avail themselves of the secrecy which the ballot affords. Amongst them will be found the cowards who think more of their own miserable skins than of the public duty imposed upon them; the hypocrites who have pleasure in deceiv-

ing; and the knaves who take provoking gold on either hand, and use the cloak of the ballot to cheat the fools who trust them. Sir, women have the courage of their opinions, as some of us have occasion to know when they give us what they figuratively term "a bit of their mind," and sometimes a very big bit indeed. Whether it is delivered as a curtain lecture or as an order of the day by the autocrat of the breakfast-table presiding at the tea urn, one thing is quite certain, they do not ask leave to tell us what they think: if the arguments they use are not enforced by the rolling-pin or the flat-iron it is because they believe in the rule of love, and that men are governed better by rewards than by punishment. And they are right. One of the hopes which I have as a result of the enfranchisement of women is that this precious ballot will be abolished—that the ancient faith will be restored which regarded the electoral franchise as a sacred trust confided to individuals to be exercised openly, with the responsibility which belongs to each individual. To my honourable friend Mr. Reynolds the colony is indebted for this blot of the ballot-box. I do not know whether he has ever felt any compunction as to the share he has taken in imposing this brand of shame upon a democratic community which dubs itself Liberal and boasts of its freedom. I confess the desire and I hope I shall live to see the end of the ballot-box, and with it all objection to the enfranchisement of women. Sir, there is a blot on this Bill which I should be very glad to see removed, and that is the bar to the election of women as members of the Legislature: if carried, that provision will not, I am quite sure, be allowed to remain much longer on the statute-book. In the meantime wise women will wait patiently. There will be no need to sport the Carmagnole in a wild skirt-dance or sing "Ça ira." In the development of Liberalism that blot will soon be removed, and it will be removed for this reason: that it is not disqualifying the individual. It is a disqualification of every electoral district in the colony, and is a deprivation of the constitutional right of the people to elect whom they please to represent them in Parliament. Sir, the electoral franchise is a qualification only, and confers no right. The right is conferred by the electoral district which chooses to exercise it in the election of their representatives. I hope it will be judiciously used. And, Sir, when the "fair girl-graduate in her golden hair" can lawfully offer to a district the honour of representing it in Parliament, the Corrupt Practices Prevention Act will be a dead-letter. The publichouse-keepers and the brewers and spirit-merchants will then have to consider their position. There is danger in the air for them. A modest sip from a bubbling spring of kisses, *splendidior auro*, perennial, inexhaustible by the most cheerful giver, will buy a vote when a gallon of beer or a bottle of whiskey would fail: and, Sir, this is a transaction to which the direct veto cannot properly be applied, and which may be justified

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even from the most extreme Rechabite point of view, because by the operation the independent elector will be made supremely happy, instead of being, in the old-fashioned way, made very drunk. This is a consummation very devoutly to be wished. Sir, I stated I would abstain from making invidious reference to the honourable gentlemen who spoke in opposition to this Bill, but I must make an exception in favour of my honourable and gallant friend Sir George Whitmore. While I listened to that honourable gentleman the other day I could not help thinking that he had forgotten that since he had ceased to be an active member of the Imperial service a new arm had been added to that service. He seemed to have forgotten that a new Legion of Honour had been created whose badge and decoration is the Red Cross—an order of merit higher and nobler, because more useful, than that of St. Michael and St. George—an order which has done more to mitigate the horrors of war, and to assuage human suffering, than any other order of merit ever invented in the world before. If the honourable gentleman had remembered that, I think he would have admitted that women have some use in the world, and deserve better consideration than the honourable gentleman was disposed to give. If my honourable and gallant friend should ever again have to lead—which I hope he never will—an expedition into the Uriwera country, I hope he may have an aide-de-camp of that order attached to his staff. An extension of the kilt would save appearances and spare blushes, whilst preserving the idea of military uniform, to which our new commandant, Colonel Fox, properly attaches importance. And should it happen to my honourable and gallant friend that he should be stretched—as he was before—on a bed of sickness, and need a gentle hand to cool his fevered brow and to moisten his parched lips, such an attendant would be very much more agreeable than a rough orderly stinking with onions and rum, with a pipe in his mouth, and showing in his personal appearance signs of the scarcity of soap and water. And, if personal service were not required, the new officer would find a sphere of action in the hospital tent and in the ambulance as useful as that of the officer of the day whose business is to inspect rations, preside at the distribution of them, and see that empty casks and flour-bags are returned from the Front to store. My honourable and gallant friend was imprudent enough in his speech to exhibit a morbid political penchant for the agricultural female, with coarse hands and red arms, who milks the cows, hoes the turnips, and assists in the hayfield, as against the sparkling tailoresses and sprightly factory-girls of the cities: this *spreta injuria forma*—the unforgiven sin—has brought down the ire of the Junos of the North, and their attendant Mercury has been despatched by wire to demand satisfaction or an apology from the honourable gentleman; and, if he is able to carry out of this scrape peace with honour,

he will meet with a better fate than I think he deserves. I have little to add; but I wish to offer a word of warning and advice. We have this Bill now. Let us keep it carefully until it can be printed on parchment and carried by the Clerk of Parliaments to Her Majesty's representative here, in order that it may receive the Royal assent. The Bill is for all present purposes quite sufficient to enable the necessary provisions to be made for the coming elections, without any kind of amendments. We take it as it is, and so secure the statutory recognition of women's right, and to show to the world that we, at any rate, in this Council have not been unmindful in our care for woman's status in this matter. We know to what dangers a Bill leaving this Council leaking with amendments is exposed in passing through the shoals and shallows of Committees, of "reasons," of Conferences, and all the rest of it. Let us avoid all danger as far as we can in this instance. If anything is done to the Bill after it leaves this Council, the responsibility will rest with those who take that action. We know by experience that Bills of this character, affecting popular rights upon the eve of a general election, are subject to very great dangers and difficulties in their passage. I remember that some few years ago a Bill, introduced by the Government in this Council, for the purpose of adjusting the balance of representation between the North Island and the South Island upon the eve of an election, was held suspended in this Council like Mahomet's coffin between the negative and positive poles of the party strength. With the consent and approval of this Council, I stepped in to break the current and release the Bill. It was then carried through Committee, read a third time, and passed before the honourable gentlemen on the Treasury benches recovered from the speechless amazement into which they were thrown by my audacity in that respect. I have a little stock of that audacity still on hand, and, if need were, with the concurrence of this Council a second achievement of that kind would be the crown of a long parliamentary career, now within measurable distance of its close. I am not wishing to trespass on the duties of my honourable friend. I merely say a word of warning, as intimating my willingness to undertake a duty, which I am quite sure I shall not be called upon to discharge. Now, the parliamentary "stonewall" is based on time, and built of wasted hours. We shall have spent four days at the end of this day in discussing this question; the practical result appears to me to be that we have been laying, not consciously perhaps, the first course of a useless structure on co-operative principles. Sir, the smile of the superintending engineer, like that of the "heathen Chinese," is childlike and bland; but I am not without apprehension as to the state of his sleeves, and I will not be euchred this time if I may by any chance avoid it.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Sir, I have no intention of referring to the speeches that have

been delivered on this question, except that I cannot help saying that I regret very much that my honourable friend Mr. Stewart should have taken it upon himself to lecture our new colleagues in this Council. I think that was entirely uncalled-for. I think it is the duty and privilege of members appointed to this Council to study their own convictions, and what is good for the colony, and to vote accordingly, irrespective of parties altogether. Then, with regard to the Hon. Dr. Pollen, I have to assure him that I do not regret any action I have taken with regard to vote by ballot. I believe it is the most Liberal measure that could have been passed for the colony at the time. What brought my attention specially to the ballot was, that I knew at elections some people were totally ruined—small tradesmen—because they would not support a particular candidate; and that was the reason that made me so persistent in urging on the vote by ballot. I think it is hardly necessary that I should take up the question as to the merits of the Bill at any length just now. My object in rising was more to defend the Council than to argue either in favour of or against the Bill; and, if the Hon. the Attorney-General will allow me, I intend to give him a little bit of my mind. He challenged me to do so. Well, it will be my duty to do so. I hope I shall not do it at all offensively, and that he will take it all in good part. Now, I have not the least hesitation in saying that this Bill did not become law last session because my honourable friend and his colleagues did not want it to become law.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—No.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—My honourable friend says, "No." I think I can prove it conclusively. My honourable friend Mr. Campbell Walker has "let the cat out of the bag." Evidently he is in the confidence of the Hon. the Attorney-General and his colleagues.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Well, I must accept the contradiction without disputing it, but I still retain my own opinion. Well, what did he state? He stated the other day that the Ministry as a Ministry were not in favour of woman's suffrage. Now, if he is correct in this,—that they were not in favour of it last session, and are not now,—then it must be clear to every member of this Council that they were the cause of the Bill not becoming law last session. But what did they do? They have thrown the blame upon the Council for a very small and trifling amendment. It is well known that the only real difference between the Council and the other branch of the Legislature was, that this Council wished to secure the same privileges to women in the country as were assured to women of the towns. It is well known that the roads in the country are not such that women can go ten or twelve miles to a poll, especially in wet weather. All that the Council insisted upon was that, where a poll was some distance away from the residences of the parties desiring to vote, they should be able to go to the nearest post-office

and record their votes there; or any other place could be fixed—it might be the Resident Magistrate's Court. Then the argument was used by the Government that it would destroy the secrecy of the ballot.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Hear, hear.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—“Hear, hear,” the honourable member says. Now I have got him. I am thoroughly astonished that any one of the legal profession should say “Hear, hear” to that. Surely he knows it would not destroy the secrecy of the ballot, more especially as the Government has been the means of introducing a system which does stand a chance of destroying the secrecy of the ballot.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—What is that?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The shearers' vote, and also the seamen's vote. It is not consistent on the part of the Government to talk about destroying the secrecy of the ballot, when they themselves have introduced what is more likely to destroy the secrecy of the ballot than anything that could be put into this Bill. We were assured by the Hon. Mr. Campbell Walker—and I take him as the exponent of the Government—that the late Mr. Ballance did wrong in placing such a strain upon the opinions of his colleagues and his party by introducing this woman's suffrage in the Bill, and he stated distinctly that neither the Government, nor the Government party as a whole, were at all in favour of this measure: in fact, he went further than that, for he went to the extent of saying that if the truth were known the advocates of woman's suffrage in the Government, and in the Government party, were in a minority upon this question. I have not the least hesitation in saying that it is my firm conviction that the Government were, last session, thoroughly opposed to the carrying of the female franchise; and I am also as well convinced that, in going round the country and addressing the electors in various places, they have not been acting exactly honestly, because, knowing perfectly well that they were opposed to the female franchise, they sheltered themselves and their duplicity—if that is a parliamentary word—by throwing the whole blame upon this Council for the loss of the Bill last session. Why, the honourable gentleman knows the Council did everything they possibly could to get the Bill passed last session. They gave way on every point excepting the one, and I say, even now, I am not disposed to give way on this point. I want the country women to have the opportunity of voting as well as the town women. It is not right to allow the legislation of this colony to pass into the hands of the towns. For many years—in fact, I may say, for twenty-three years—I represented the City of Dunedin, and yet, while representing that city, I never forgot the fact that the cities depended more upon the country than the country upon the cities. I never tried to favour the city at the expense of the country, and I am not going to do so now. I intend to insist upon the amend-

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ment that the country women shall have the same privileges in regard to voting as those enjoyed by women in the towns. The second reading of this Bill I suppose there will be no difficulty in carrying; but, if any amendments are proposed carrying out my views, so as to give women of the country the opportunity of recording their votes without having to go ten or twelve miles to the poll, I shall be found voting for them.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—I do not desire to enter at all largely into this very wide-reaching question, because we have had it before us on so many previous occasions. But I feel unwilling to give an absolutely silent vote on a measure the far-reaching importance of which many of us do not seriously realise. On the first occasion when I had the honour to address the Council on this subject I sought to point out that woman, in her moral elevation of character, in the attributes of her mind, in the varied character of her moral and intellectual attributes, took a higher level than that occupied by man: I endeavoured to show that the conflict of political business and the worry of politics, the necessity for compromise entailed, and the vulgar struggles of political life, did not furnish a fitting field for the further development and culture of these, her higher attributes. I endeavoured to show that Christian civilisation had, up to the present moment, ennobled woman; and that woman had amply repaid her debt by the manner in which she had inspired lofty sentiments in men, by the marked contribution that she had made to the growth and culture of lofty principles in society. I endeavoured to show that in the performance of these great and truly ennobling functions she had contributed more than her part to the advancement of the interests which we all have at heart. I endeavoured to point out that women hated compromise,—that their characters were naturally full of childlike integrity and noble simplicity. I endeavoured to show that all progress in new countries and in political life was the result of compromise. What does the term “politics” mean? Whatever it may mean in the classical sense, in the literal sense it means the furtherance of some line of policy *quo modo*. What are the means employed for the furtherance of a line of policy? Political compromise as a means to some ultimate goal. We may put it as we like, but when talking amongst ourselves we know perfectly well that there is a great deal of chicanery in politics. The term seems a hard one, but I cannot find a gentler one. Let any man who has had as many years' experience of politics as I have try to deny the fact that we are so constantly called upon to make compromises that our consciences become blunted. Do we desire that the conscience of woman, with her keen sense of right and wrong, which is her prominent characteristic, should become blunted by conflict with lower and less nobler forms of procedure than her mind is attuned to? I think not. The argument has been advanced that the introduc-

tion of a very much loftier element into our public affairs should elevate rather than deteriorate or injure public matters. All that would be excellent in its way were it not that it is with practical difficulties we have to deal as practical men, that we do not enter into a perfectly new, fresh, and unbroken political life, that we have an inheritance of the complex system which we administer, and that it has been clearly shown that the one reason why the Anglo-Saxon race has made a greater success of party system and government than any other race is that it has always been contented to stop short at the practical need of the hour. The Anglo-Saxons have never desired to prosecute any proposition to its legitimate conclusion. They have been satisfied to legislate from day to day according to their needs, and they have never set before themselves an ideal goal, for which they were prepared to make prodigious sacrifices. In this matter the aim at the lower flight has resulted in vast practical solidity, and vast practical good to the country. Now, if we aim, for instance, at creating in one single hour one hundred and thirty thousand electors, whose political ideas are essentially ideal, whose political training takes the necessarily straight flight toward the essentially excellent and good, we may find ourselves landed in some of those strange complex positions which our French neighbours have been constantly experiencing, and, odd though it may seem, we may very easily drop into autocratic government. There is no doubt it is only by the gradual acquisition of the necessary knowledge to dovetail expediency with experience, to reconcile due concessions with principle, with the essential kept clearly in view—it is by means of this kind, and the fact that we have confined ourselves to such means, that practical legislation in all these new countries has been made possible. I am tempted against my inclination into this form of disquisition, because one's mind is so full of the subject. I shall now labour to place the matter before you in a more concrete form; but, before doing so, I should like very hurriedly to refer to the character of argument which has been used in inducing honourable members to vote for this measure. My honourable friend Mr. Montgomery, for whose political experience and sagacity I entertain the highest respect, quoted to you yesterday the passage of a measure in 1829, dwelling on the alleged fact that it had been passed distinctly without any appeal for it on behalf of the country. He was endeavouring to justify us in passing this measure on the ground that it was constitutional to make great electoral changes without relegating such subjects to the constituents, and in proof of this he quoted the passage of the Catholic Emancipation Act in 1829. I ask my honourable friend to look again at the page of history. Was there ever a subject in English history more agitated than that? Was there in the whole history of English legislation any matter the neglect of which, up to the point of its concession, lay as a greater blot upon the love of freedom and

aspirations of the Anglo-Saxon race? Had not the whole of the intellectual thinkers of England cried aloud for the concession of Catholic emancipation? Had not the absurdity of five millions of people being kept in subjection in a free country been over and over again held up as an opprobrium to the English people? Had not the very best thinkers and the very wisest men in the Kingdom cried out against the crime of trampling upon five millions of their fellow-subjects? How was the privilege granted finally? I only want to point out to you the practical character of the English Legislature. Was it all these beautiful sentiments that led to the passage of the Bill? Was it the public sentiment that existed over the whole world in favour of the concession to these people of their legitimate liberties that secured the measure? No; it was due to the fact that Mr. Fitzgerald had to go back to his constituents for re-election, and was defeated by Daniel O'Connell on the question. It was because politics and Government had become a crying scandal and a practical impossibility in the face of such an anomaly. If there had not been a vast upheaval among the people for this change in the electoral laws it would not have been carried. My honourable friend then referred to the repeal of the corn-laws by Sir Robert Peel. Gracious me! has there ever been such an agitation—shaking the very Empire to its centre—as on this question of the repeal of the corn-law? And what induced England to do it? The people, from the utter ruin of trade, were starving purely and simply, like rats in holes. Gracious heavens! are we to be told that such precedents justify us in altering the whole of the electoral system in this colony? This facility is in keeping with the character of the argument which has been so readily and sweetly received by this Council, which has been lapped up as if it were mother's milk by men whose years and experience far transcend mine. My honourable friend Mr. Oliver pointed out the fact that Queens have distinguished themselves in governing England, and asked, If women in that position showed such capacity, why should not women in general be enfranchised? Sir, there is an old political axiom, "When kings rule, women govern; when women rule, men govern." We have been confronted again and again with Queen Elizabeth. Well, I say that Elizabeth went within an ace of ruining her Empire. Do we not know that she took so mean, so parsimonious, so limited a view of the destiny of a great nation that she went within an ace, by grudging legitimate expenditure, of crushing the navy, although urged to action by such talent, such men, as have never been before or since known in the history of a nation? What about Burleigh? What about Cecil? What about Raleigh, Bacon, Shakespeare? What about Drake? She was surrounded by the most brilliant galaxy of talent that has ever ornamented the Anglo-Saxon race; and yet her narrow, paltry, miserable caprice imperilled all. There was never any one more overpraised than Elizabeth, never any one more

fickle; and we are to hand over the future of this colony to a hundred and thirty thousand women, simply because history is quoted to show that Elizabeth was a woman of capacity and experience. I merely answer that Elizabeth's capacity would be no justification for our emancipating one hundred and thirty thousand women. My honourable friend Mr. Oliver tells us that Queen Anne actually sat in Parliament, and that Lord Marlborough addressed her as she sat. Aye; but does anybody know the relations that existed between Queen Anne and Lord Marlborough? Does any one know the character of Marlborough? He was a great soldier, but he was a mean, contemptible, tricky hound. And was the period in which Marlborough lived analogous to ours? I think not. Then, my honourable friend spoke of the reign of Queen Victoria—a reign far more distinguished than that of Queen Elizabeth. She is far and away incomparably a superior Queen, because she has shown an expansion of mind, and a growing capacity to abstain from interference, during her reign of the last fifty years. What is her history? The very first thing she did was to endeavour to stand out against her Ministers for the purpose of retaining her maids of honour; and we know perfectly well that if it had not been for the good sense of Lord Melbourne she would have taken that round turn which would have ruined the whole of her career. As a Queen she was fortunate in having a Minister like Melbourne, for whom she had a great respect. She did what she was told, and took the right turn, and her history has been affected by it ever since. Then, she made a most fortunate marriage. She married a man of infinite capacity, with the strongest aristocratic proclivities, the sweetest manner, of a gentle temper, and with the greatest possible reasons for ingratiating himself with the British public. Subsequently she grew with the experience of the times to be a great Queen, because she has not attempted to govern contrary to constitutional practice. What we have to look to for the amelioration of society is this: The genuine spiritual motive-power with which all society is throbbing at this moment. And what is it? It is that new conscience which has grown up with the growth of culture and of civilisation, and which has taught men that they must be considerate towards their fellow-men, which has taught men the necessity of making concessions to operatives and labourers, and which has taught the grand lesson of Christian charity to appear in the workshops and in the harvest-fields. The difficulty of our race is essential and practical. We have an intricate finance; we have a complex condition of indebtedness, with all its ramifications permeating the whole of our commercial system. We have reached the stage that one single injudicious step in any direction in response to some enthusiastic wave of public feeling may land us in absolute insolvency and endless disgrace. And now we are going to bestow the franchise on one hundred and thirty thousand women who have

never given one single thought to any of those things. Sir, I am astonished—overcome with surprise. But there is the humorous side of the thing. With all our eagerness to enfranchise women, we will not even give them the chance to vote—we refuse them the electoral right. Imagine these women, say, of the tailoresses' unions, emerging out of the shops to-morrow in a city like this, in the midst of a howling sou'-easter, and crowding round the polling-booth in the interval for dinner, and then going back to their work wet to the skin! I never denied woman's greatness or intellectual capacity, but I desire to be considerate for her physical weakness. I desire to treat her with genuine chivalry. If I clothe her with a great and new function, I desire to treat her with the same consideration, at least, as the Government wish to extend to the commercial traveller. I should like to permit myself the luxury, Sir, of expressing in brief but strong language the kind of sentiment I entertain for such an affectation of sentimentality as is shown in this Bill. It is beneath contempt to palter with a great question in this way; and what are the pivots upon which this vital question is going to turn, and where is it all going to lead us? At one time of my life I lived in a foreign country which was governed by two antagonistic races. One of those races, though in a minority, nevertheless had special parliamentary representation. Finding that a craze for voting on a numerical basis was in vogue, and fearing the loss of their special representation, the minority agreed to sacrifice their political convictions in their personal interest in order to increase the number of their votes. Sir, it is by means of this kind that we are hurried to our doom. It is with arguments such as these I have attempted to refute that we cozen our conscience.

The Hon. Mr. KERR.—Sir, I have listened with very great interest to the speeches which have been delivered on the question of the second reading of the Electoral Bill, and I consider that the speech of the Hon. Mr. Bowen, especially, put the question very forcibly and exhaustively before this Council. He treated it in a statesmanlike manner, taking into consideration all the circumstances for and against the question. There were other excellent speeches, delivered on the opposite side. I was somewhat grieved to hear the Hon. Mr. Oliver, in his speech, give utterance to a sentence in which he said he was prepared to give the women the franchise, but that he was also prepared to disfranchise any one who was so unfortunate as to be in the receipt of charity. I think, Sir, that was a cruel position to take up, and one most chilling to the feelings of those who, perhaps, in the course of their lives have occupied good positions, and performed many useful and benevolent actions, and who may, perhaps, in some degree, have helped to build up fortunes of men like the Hon. Mr. Oliver, who now turn round and refuse to give them the privilege of voting. Have we no more regard for men who have played their part in the colonisation of this country,

Hon. Dr. Grace

and helped on its progress, than to place them on the level of felons? I was sorry indeed to hear the remarks which fell from the lips of that honourable gentleman, whom I always considered to be liberal and kind-hearted. Now, Sir, I may state that I will vote for the second reading of this Bill. There are, however, several clauses which I take exception to, and which, if altered, will improve the Bill considerably. There is the question of the closing of the polls at seven o'clock. It is a well-known fact that labourers, tradesmen, and mechanics cannot go to the poll if it closes at six o'clock when they are living at a distance from their workshops. If they do vote before six o'clock it means hurrying down to the polling-booths in their working-clothes, without going to their supper or tea, or being able to wash and dress themselves after their day's work. Seeing the great comfort and convenience promised to the classes mentioned by closing the poll at seven instead of six p.m., I have no doubt this House and the other Chamber will readily agree to the alteration. I quite agree that the seamen who are unavoidably absent from their districts should have the right to vote; and I do not stop there: I say that every person who has the right to be on an electoral roll should be offered every facility to vote on the day of election, no matter if he should happen to be absent from his district. We know well enough that workmen take temporary employment here, there, and everywhere. They are glad to take employment one week in one town, and in another town the next, or in different parts of a district which is divided into different constituencies; and therefore I consider that every one on the electoral roll should be afforded by this Council and by the Government an opportunity of recording his vote. I now come, Sir, to the principal cause of the discussion in this Council, and that is the question of the women's franchise. Well, one would imagine, after seeing the petition lying on the table, that there were a large number of women desirous of receiving the power to vote; but honourable members, if they have had any experience in electioneering, or in getting up petitions, well know how easy it is to get them up. I believe there are thirty thousand signatures in this petition. I will not question their genuineness. I will simply point out the ease with which such petitions are got up. I have known people to sign petitions without reading them, or without knowing anything about them whatever; and I have known persons to get signatures to petitions as readily as possible, provided there was nothing to pay. Possibly the means which are generally adopted to obtain signatures have been overlooked in the case of this petition. It has been pointed out that the petition has grown from year to year until it has reached its present dimensions; but it is necessary to look round and see how this has been accomplished. We know there are two very great questions agitating the public mind at the

present time. One of these is the prohibition-of-liquor question. Now, the prohibition question has been taken up by the clergy, by temperance advocates, and by ladies with strong minds and a great regard for woman's rights. I have no doubt they are right, to a certain extent, in endeavouring to reform the liquor traffic in this colony. I think we could very well dispense with a large number of the houses in which liquor is retailed in the colony; but I think it will be of no avail for the Government to bring in or attempt to pass any reasonable, fair, and moderate Licensing Bill for this colony if the woman's franchise is given. I believe the women will assuredly vote for prohibition pure and simple. Regardless of the risk to the financial stability of the colony, they, I believe, would be prepared to confiscate the property of the people who own the buildings in which the liquor traffic is carried on, and thereby bring those people to utter ruin, and do such damage to the colony at large as will take years to rectify. Now, it is a well-known fact that expensive buildings, costing from £10,000 to £20,000, have been erected for the purpose of affording comfortable accommodation for travellers, and for those who have not houses of their own. Those houses have been erected with the sanction and approval of the State, and the plans of these houses were submitted to and approved of by the Licensing Committees before they were erected. Is it reasonable to suppose that these houses, costing such large sums of money, should be simply licensed for the short term of one year? I think no such thing as that was ever intended. So long as the licensees conform to the licensing-law they have a right to a renewal. Now, it has been stated by honourable gentlemen who have spoken in favour of giving women the franchise that it will be simply duplicating the voting-power. I am inclined to differ somewhat from that, because I believe it will give a much more extensive power to the male voter than honourable members seem to think. The "one man one vote" is a Liberal measure; but if we pass this Bill "the one man one vote" will be virtually abolished, because, in the majority of cases, the family will vote with the father, and thereby give him an unfair preponderance over the single voter. On the other hand, there will be discussions and contentions amongst the family, with the result that the domestic peace will be jeopardized. But those who have children, and who are not in easy circumstances themselves, will have to send their children out to service, and they may have to go to shops, or to domestic service in other towns. Who will exert the influence then? The master or mistress, on the approach of an election, will be very pleasant, and carefully point out to the girls the direction their votes should take; and they will thereby be able to monopolize the votes of the servants who are in their employ. But the greatest objection I have to the women's franchise is on account of the injury it may do to future legislation, and to the measures that

are in existence at present. I refer more particularly to the education question. I do not believe a better Act was ever passed in any country than our Education Act. Honourable gentlemen are aware that our present system of education has been attacked from time to time for the last fifteen years. There are a large section of colonists who desire to obtain assistance for denominational schools, and they have tried from time to time to obtain that concession, but without avail. They have even gone the length of coercion. I remember when a Bill, known as "Pyke's Bill," was introduced into the House, all those who voted against that measure were placarded in "perpetual memory"; and I do not think they would receive many votes from this section of the community after recording their votes against that Bill. Now, seeing that there is such a determination to break down this system, I think that we ought to be careful that we do not enable the women of the colony to assist in upsetting it. There is also the Bible-reading-in-schools proposal, agitated for by Presbyterians and others. They want to make that a compulsory matter. One party wants compulsory religious instruction in these schools, while the other insists upon monetary aid to private schools; and if these two parties were to get what they require, the system and the quality of education would speedily suffer. And this is where contention will arise. In the majority of families there is peace and harmony, and sons and daughters dutifully accept advice from their parents. Immediately the clergy leave their high and sacred position to take part in politics, and set themselves to induce children to vote upon certain questions in opposition to the wishes and feelings of their parents, discord will begin. I think this is one question that should make us consider carefully whether or not we should extend the franchise to women. Now, these matters I have mentioned will cause strife in communities, and I feel satisfied there are thousands and thousands of women at the present day in New Zealand who would prefer peace in the household to the franchise. If we introduce strife, by conferring this franchise, Good-bye to all thoughts of comfortable homes. I object to give the ladies the franchise through a consideration of kindness for themselves. There has been a great deal of talk by members of this Council about their fitness and unfitness for the responsibility connected with the franchise, and several honourable gentlemen tried to prove they were qualified. Well, no member of this Council, to my mind, tried to show that they were not. I believe that the women are, mentally, as capable of exercising the higher rights, and performing the higher duties, as the men. I believe that, in their sphere, in the position they have occupied, and the position in which they now stand, they are more valuable to the community than if they were made not only voters but legislators. Is there anything more beautiful to contemplate than a woman in her home surrounded by her family,

Hon. Mr. Kerr

devoting her time to the performance of acts of benevolence, relieving the sick and distressed, assisting benevolent institutions, and generally performing the duties that really lie in the path of woman? The Hon. Mr. Montgomery told us yesterday what the women were doing in Chicago in effecting reforms in regard to the management of the lunatic asylums and benevolent institutions. Are our women prevented from doing anything like that, or doing good work in the same direction? The people of this colony owe a deep debt of gratitude to the women for the example they have shown in relieving the distressed, and also in helping our many public charities. Sir, I think that most people find pleasure in the remembrance of happy days spent in well-ordered homes. They remember with gratitude the good and kind counsel given by their parents, and recognize the efforts made by them to instruct their children in their moral and social duties. Who can foretell the effect of introducing politics into a well-ordered household? Burns, the national poet of Scotland, in describing rural life in "The Cottar's Saturday Night," says,—

From scenes like these auld Scotia's grandeur
springs,—

That makes her loved at home, revered abroad.

Now, Scotland is not the only country noted for its scenes of domestic felicity. New Zealand follows in the same good path, and I hope that our social system will not be upset by this piece of experimental and mischievous legislation. By maintaining and extending our educational system, and by a wise and considerate reform of our licensing-laws, we shall do more solid good for this colony than by giving the franchise to the women. I have said before that it is a small minority of ladies who wish to have the franchise. The question is principally stirred up by those persons who are professional and generally well-paid agitators upon this question and that of prohibition. I think I have nothing further to say, but that I hope this Bill will be so amended in Committee that we shall be spared the degradation of seeing the women of the colony participate, as they will if they receive the franchise, in the turmoil and trouble of electioneering. If the minority of women who really wish for the franchise succeed by their agitation in dragging the women of New Zealand into the political arena they will have done irreparable injury to the colony. Those women who so far forget themselves as to take an active part in political warfare will have to listen to language which is not tolerated in respectable company; and I would advise those ladies who wish to have so pernicious a privilege to reconsider the matter, to be satisfied with their homes and home duties, to do what good they can to the benevolent institutions of this colony, and leave to the men, who are of stouter fibre, the joy, the strife, and the excitement of political combat.

The Hon. Mr. JENNINGS.—Sir, a very great deal of what I had intended to say on this question has been said by other members of this Council. I wish to state that I am

in favour of the franchise being extended to women for two reasons. Those two reasons are taken from a little pamphlet sent to me by the Woman's Franchise League of Auckland. They give sixteen reasons, but I shall content myself with giving two. The first is, "Because it is the foundation of all political liberty that those who obey the law should be able to have a voice in choosing those who make the law"; and the second is, "Because it is just." One or two points touched by previous speakers render a reply necessary. One would think, from what has been said, that this question of woman suffrage is of recent origin. It is nothing of the sort. It came before the country at almost identically the same time as Thomas Paine brought out his "Rights of Man"; and I do not find that the political enfranchisement of woman is at all a modern proposal, for Marion Willis published a vindication of the rights of women as far back as 1792. Then, we have gloomy prognostications coming from various speakers as to what the effect of the granting of the franchise to women will be. As the Hon. Mr. Montgomery pointed out, there has never yet been any great reform brought forward but the most gloomy forebodings had been uttered concerning it. Even the great Iron Duke, the Duke of Wellington, when the Reform Bill was brought forward at Home, ventured to prophesy that the great Empire of Britain would collapse altogether. Has that occurred? All reasoning men will come to this conclusion: that the reforms granted to the people under the most gloomy forebodings, and under peculiar conditions, have been to the advantage of the British Empire in every way. My honourable friend Mr. Walker made one remark—I regret to see that he is not in his place—in regard to women taking up the position of book-cannibals, and said they are generally referred to as "book-fiends." I regret that the honourable gentleman used that remark, as it was not at all necessary under the circumstances. If he were aware what is the dire necessity that drives women to become "book-fiends," and to go forward into the world to take their share of essentially honest labour, I do not think he would have used the remark in the sense he did on that occasion. Woman has every right to enter every field and avenue whereby she can gain an honest living. That right ought not to be denied to her by any man. As other speakers referred to women-workers in uncomplimentary terms, I should like to give to the Council the remarks made by one of the most eminent historians of the present day—Justin McCarthy. It is with pleasure that I quote Mr. McCarthy, the present leader of the Irish party in the House of Commons, because it has been my experience, unfortunately, that those of the Irish people with whom I come most in contact are opposed to female suffrage. Mr. McCarthy, in one of the cleverest papers I have yet seen in connection with this question, makes some very pertinent remarks. The word-painting he indulges in is so clever, and it is such an honest picture of a working-woman,

that I will not risk spoiling it by adding any words of my own. He says,—

"The same will be found true of the working-women. Not long ago I was at a meeting in Princes' Hall, Piccadilly, presided over by Lord Dunraven. It was called for the purpose of trying to bring about some better conditions of labour for the poor working-women in the East End of London. Many men made good speeches—peers, and members of the House of Commons, and clergymen. There was even a bishop there—all endowed with special gifts of eloquence. But the speech which interested me most was made by a working-woman. It was not merely because she understood the practical question better than we did; it was not because—like the waitress whom Disraeli describes in his 'Coningsby,' through the mouth of his Sidonia—she was 'mistress of her subject.' Her expert knowledge, of course, counted for a great deal. But, beyond this, there was, to my mind, a remarkable capacity in her for taking at once a broad and practical view of any subject; for recognising the inevitable necessity of compromise; for accepting the conditions under which reform of any kind has to be made; for admitting limitations. Besides all this, there was a certain composure about her; a certain dignity of manner. She was neither obtrusive nor diffident. She seemed to say, in effect, 'You must take me as I am; I don't pretend to be a lady in the conventional sense of the word, and I don't pretend to be a good speaker, but I have something to say, and I want to say it. I am not anxious to make a speech, but I have something to say to you which ought to be said.'"

I think that is a proper and a practical way of putting it on behalf of the working-women. I say that, as far as the arguments have gone in this Council—and it has been ably debated, in my opinion, and I have listened with very great pleasure indeed to this debate—it has been one of the greatest pleasures I have had since coming to Wellington to listen to the speech of my honourable friend Dr. Pollen, whom I might term the Rupert of debate. I say, Sir, that many of the arguments used in this Council against women's suffrage are, under the condition of things existing at present,—I hardly like to use the term,—nonsensical. A condition of things has arisen in the world within the last fifty years that has altered all. And this new era must in some way go forward, to enable woman to take her position and to become what she should be in the world—one of its brightest ornaments. The Hon. Mr. Stewart's speech referred to the position of the new members of this Council in regard to this question. I feel very strongly upon this matter. I believe that the existence of this Council will be justified to the people outside if we carry this measure of woman's suffrage. I believe that will be the logical conclusion come to outside; and I do not say it with any vain threat that if this reform is not granted a feeling will arise in the country against this Council which would not be a correct one, or one

that might place members of the Council, perhaps, in a peculiar position. Again, an argument has been used that this question had never been before the country. It is an absurd one. It has been before the country for fully fifteen years. The Bill has been sent up from another place—I believe that is the correct way of referring to the representative Chamber—on three or four different occasions. Was not the late head of the Government, the Hon. Mr. Ballance, strongly in favour of the proposal? I know that in a conversation I had with him some eighteen months ago he expressed the very strongest feelings in regard to this measure, and hoped it would become law soon. Sir George Grey, Sir William Fox, and Sir John Hall have favoured the suffrage being extended to women, showing that the leaders on both sides concur in the proposal. Have not all the leading newspapers in this colony written in favour of the enfranchisement of woman? And at the last election the question was put to almost every candidate who stood upon the public platform. There were large majorities in the other place in favour of the measure; and, if by any means this clause should be rejected, I shall be anxious to know what the feeling outside will be. It has been urged that we should reject the women's franchise because its operation would unsex woman. Good gracious! Could a more unmitigated piece of "buncombe" be uttered—that the effect of this measure would be to "unsex" women? It is altogether an expression that should not have been used. I have read Ovid's "Metamorphoses," but do not believe what is stated therein. Some reference has been made as to the stage that the women's suffrage movement has arrived at. Wyoming has been frequently mentioned, also the Isle of Man. I have an extract here which shows how the elections are conducted in the Isle of Man, and I think it will be worth while to place that paper before the Council. The extract is from Stanton's work on "The Woman Question in Europe":—

"After a spirited contest between the two branches of the Manx Legislature in the year 1880, the Representative Chamber, the House of Keys, prevailed on the Upper Chamber to consent to the enfranchisement of women owners of real estate of the annual value of £4 and upwards. Women occupiers and lodgers are still excluded; but the feeling in the House of Keys was so strong in favour of giving women some share of representation that they at last consented, as a compromise, to accept the limited measure of enfranchisement which was offered by the other House. The Bill received the Royal assent in 1881, and the first election in which women took part was held immediately afterwards. The women showed the most marked appreciation of their new privilege by polling in large numbers, and the universal opinion in the island seems to have been expressed by one of the gentlemen who was returned, namely, 'That the new political element had acted in the most admirable manner.'"

Hon. Mr. Jennings

I think that will prove to honourable gentlemen that the women are really capable of exercising the voting-power in a sensible and capable manner. The Hon. Mr. Montgomery referred to an article in *Harper's Monthly*. I would advise every member of this Council to get that magazine and to read that article himself. It is really a remarkable article from this point of view: that it shows to what extent intelligent women can go in the way of reforming a city, in whatever way you like to take it. One public business in which they took part, and probably the most interesting, was the management of municipal affairs in Chicago. We find that a great difficulty arose there owing to the Councillors of the city not being able to settle a trouble that had arisen through an accumulation of garbage, and the women were called in to take the matter in hand. I will give the result in the writer's own words, to show how they got over the difficulty. If those honourable gentlemen who are interested in the management of this City of Wellington will read this account, they will find that the women of Chicago took a practical view of a very difficult question, and settled it when the men were completely dumbfounded. The extract is as follows:—

"One of the new undertakings of the Chicago women is the task set for itself by the Municipal Reform League. A mass meeting was held in the Music Hall, Judge Gresham presiding. Among the speakers were the Mayor, the Commissioner of Public Works, and the Health Commissioners. A clergyman arraigned them as responsible for the sorry state of the streets, and was followed by two lady speakers. The result of the meeting was the formation of a society, officered by women. The work performed is all in the direction of forcing the public officials to do their duty. Miss Sweet, who was elected president of the society, knows what every contractor is doing, as well as who is negligent and who is faithful. She insists that the plan adopted by her society, if pursued, will transform Chicago into the model city of the world so far as public tidiness is concerned. The reforms will not stop until they have destroyed the entire contract system. An amazing and disheartening discovery attended the beginning of this undertaking. The garbage of the city was supposed to be burned as it accumulated: instead, it was being dumped in a circle of hillocks around the outskirts of the town. A plan for disposing of it by fire had failed, and the officials sat hopelessly down and gave up the job. The women took up the task, and last year three methods were undergoing trial, and 189 tons a day were being burned. That mere incident in the history of this movement for clean streets is a grand return for the investment of interest in the project which the public has made."

That will prove, I think, that the women are capable of taking part in the consideration of a matter of such a nature as that: and it is a very important matter, too, in my opinion—the work of looking after the sanitary condition of

a city. They have the same epidemics to encounter as the men have, and they are quite within their rights in having a voice in looking after the sanitary conditions of a city. The Hon. Dr. Grace and the Hon. Mr. Bowen seemed to be considerably exercised about what effect the coming into politics would have upon women. The Hon. Dr. Grace told us he would like to have woman on such a high pinnacle that nothing at all could touch her: is practically what his assertion amounted to. That is all very well in theory; but when we come down to every-day life, when we know the women have to submit to a great deal of the hardships and a great many of the inconveniences the men suffer, I say it is only right and fair that they should have a voice in the government of the country. Other speakers referred very pointedly to the influence woman already has in regard to politics. I should like to ask those honourable gentlemen what that influence is—whether it is a legitimate influence or an illegitimate influence. My honourable friend who comes from New Plymouth, Mr. Kelly, will pardon me for just drawing his attention to one little point. I would ask him this: Whether the two women who are on the Taranaki Education Board have not proved of great use and rendered valuable assistance in the counsels of that body. I am using this as an argument that the women have shown capability, wisdom, and good sense in the part they have taken in the administration of educational matters; and this fact proves they are quite capable of merely dropping a paper into the ballot-box. Taking the varied and prominent positions that they do in public and private life, I say they have shown that capacity which entitles them to the exercise of the franchise. And honourable members will talk about the helpless condition of women! It appears to me the pen must be dipped in the rainbow and dried by the dust from a butterfly's wings when woman is the theme with some honourable gentlemen. They will not come down to life as it is with the majority of women in the world. During the Maori War here, many women were left widows with families; and on whom was devolved the responsibility of bringing up those families, and bringing them up so well that some of them occupy high positions in New Zealand at the present time? The whole responsibility was left on the woman, and she did her duty well and nobly. I think the time has come when she should be taken into the counsels of men, and I believe her influence in those counsels will be of the best character. It is stated outside that there is a feeling of wavering, a feeling of doubt prevalent amongst some members of the Council. I say to those honourable members who are in doubt and wavering on the point, settle the question at once in your own minds, and you will never regret bestowing the suffrage on woman. Let members toe the mark in regard to this question now, and not shelve it for another year, as, I believe, will be the effect of the notice of motion given by the Hon. Mr. Kelly. Let there be no further play-

ing with this question. We have come here with a specific object, and that object should be carried out. It is, in my opinion, our duty to accept the Electoral Bill precisely as it comes up from the representatives of the other Chamber, with the exception of one or two minor amendments, similar to the one which I intend to move in Committee, that the hours of polling should be extended to seven o'clock. I have little more to say beyond this: that if we pass this Bill, and if, as has been asserted during this debate, many women do not want it, they have a very easy way of getting over the difficulty. They can appeal to the other House or to this Council to repeal the Act, and the question can be very easily settled. But, I say, let us endeavour to carry out the wishes of the people by giving this right. Let there be no more croaking and forebodings as to what is going to take place, as has been the case in the past. There will always be such forebodings; and I say, Away with them! I shall conclude my remarks with one or two verses by one of the greatest poets, to my mind, that ever put pen to paper—I refer to the German poet, Goethe. He says,—

The future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow:
We press still thorow;
Naught that abides in it,
Daunting us—onward!
While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Come phantasm and error,
Perplexing the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.
But heard are the voices,
Heard are the sages,
The works and the ages:
"Choose well! Your choice is
Brief, and yet endless."

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—Sir, it will be within the memory of honourable gentlemen that I said something upon the question of the women's franchise some time ago. I wish to explain the position I took up then, so that I shall not be charged with inconsistency in what I am about to say to-night. I then said that, arguing from the proposition that every person born into the world had a right to live, and as the laws we live under determine how all shall live, it is right that all should have a voice in the making of those laws. That is the position I took up then, and I say so still. But, in considering a question of this kind, there is another phase to be taken into consideration, and that is the question of expediency. The Hon. Mr. Bolt spoke rather slightly, to my mind, in regard to expediency. He spoke of side-issues, and one thing and another; but I can tell the honourable gentleman this is the age of expediency and expedients, and for the same reason that a man puts a patch on his trousers, — because he cannot make a new garment out of an old one. I may tell the honourable gentleman also that when he comes to consider the measures which are to be brought before us during this session he will see that this phase of the question must always be taken into consideration. The honourable gentleman

said that in arguing a question of this kind we should start from logical premisses. I quite agree with him there, and I think he must agree with me when I say if those premisses are unsound the reasoning from them falls to the ground. The honourable gentleman told us that men have votes because they pay taxes, and that as women pay taxes they should have the same privilege. I say that men have not got votes because they pay taxes; and if the honourable gentleman will take the trouble to look at the Bill which we are considering he will find there that provision is made for paupers having votes. The honourable gentleman, therefore, to make his position logically sound, should have shown that paupers were paying taxes. As he neglected to do so, I say that is no logical argument at all. Then, he referred to Queen Elizabeth and George IV., and he quoted Thackeray to show what George IV. was—a tailor's dummy, or something like that. I do not know what the honourable gentleman was trying to show by this. If he wished to show that Elizabeth was a better Queen than George IV. was a King there might have been something in it. But what then? How does that affect the question under consideration? He quoted Thackeray. I am about to quote another authority and a more modern one. I am going to quote from the "History of England" by J. R. Green, M.A., Examiner in the School of Modern History at Oxford. Speaking of Elizabeth, he says, "It was an age of political lying; but, in the profusion and recklessness of her lies, Elizabeth stood without a peer in Christendom." I do not think the honourable gentleman has read that history. On the last occasion I said I hoped that when this question came before us it would be brought down in a separate measure. I feel disappointed that this was not done. I may say I object altogether to the way in which the Government have endeavoured to smuggle this question through. I say they have taken an unfair advantage of us in endeavouring to force this provision upon us by bringing it in in the way they have done. The real position is this: There are provisions in this Bill we all approve of, and should like to see become law, and they know it; and, knowing that, they have inserted this female franchise, in the hope that sooner than kill the Bill we will pass the whole of it, when this provision that I speak of overshadows all the others so far as importance is concerned and the results that may follow from passing it. I have another objection to this woman's suffrage. I say it never has been before the country in the proper sense of the term. The Hon. Mr. Montgomery and the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson seemed quite indifferent in that respect. They do not care whether it has been before the country or not—they do not care a bit—and my honourable friend Mr. Jenkinson took up what, I may say, is a very peculiar position in regard to this. He said it was the duty of this Council to lead the country, and if we referred this question back to the constituencies we should be virtually admitting we

were not capable of discharging the duties we have been sent here to perform. The Hon. Mr. Montgomery quoted English precedents to show that certain measures had been passed without being put before the country. If there is anything I aspire to be considered it is a democrat, and I think it is one of the fundamental principles of democracy that the people shall rule—that the majority shall rule; and it sounds like heresy to me to hear these honourable gentlemen advancing such opinions as those. The Hon. Mr. Jenkinson told us that Mr. Gladstone said it is the place of a statesman to lead the country. I do not know what he meant us to infer from that. All I can say is that I admire the honourable gentleman's modesty. Then, the Hon. Mr. Oliver and the Hon. Mr. Jennings, who followed on the same line, told us that this question had been before the country at the last election. I am surprised to hear this. The question before the country at the last general election—the vital question—was the question of capital and labour. That was the question. The whole thing arose out of the maritime strike. Feeling ran very high on both sides throughout the colony; and the result of the election was the return of a large number of men from the labour ranks—from the workshops. That was the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question. The result proves that it was so. To say that woman's franchise has been before the country is simply to say that it has been in the same position as the single-tax question. Has that not been before the country? Are honourable gentlemen in ten minutes prepared to vote for the "single tax," and Bible-reading in schools, and elective Governors, and a few more of those questions that are put to candidates when they are on the platform? I hope this question may yet be referred to the constituencies. I cannot see that there will be any harm from delay. I do not know why there is any reason for urgency. I know of no burning question that is before this progressive country at the present time that cannot be decided by men. And see how illogical they are. They will give the ladies the vote, but they will not give them the corollary, a seat in the House. I had expected to hear some logic from my honourable friend Mr. Bolt on that point. But let us look at one or two reasons that have been advanced. The Hon. Mr. Montgomery says it is in advance of public opinion that women should have a seat in Parliament. I say the whole question is in advance of public opinion, and if we are to be guided by public opinion we ought to strike out these clauses altogether. I take it, he means by this that we should proceed cautiously. If he means that, why not allow women to exercise the vote at by-elections; and by that means educate them up to it? The Hon. Mr. Stewart also spoke with regard to this question; but really the reasons he put forward were so weak that I must apologize to the Council for troubling it with them. He said, "If you give women a seat in the House, you will also have to give seats to Civil servants and clergymen." It has

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always been an enigma to me why Civil servants should not have a seat in this Council. I cannot understand why they should be six months out of the Civil Service before they can take a seat in the Legislature; and I think the sooner this disability is done away with the better. As to clergymen, what objection is there to their having a seat in the House?

An Hon. MEMBER.—They can have a seat.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—The Hon. Mr. Stewart says they cannot. I am simply showing the weakness of his argument, and I have already apologized to the Council for troubling it with his arguments. The Hon. Mr. Oliver said the reason why it was not proposed to give women the seat was that they did not ask for it.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—No.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—I understood the honourable gentleman to say they did not ask for it. If the honourable gentleman is prepared to give everybody everything that is asked for, then I have nothing further to say to him in that respect. Most of the arguments brought forward in support of the female franchise were really out of place altogether. They would be more in place were the speakers proposing or replying to the toast of "The Ladies": expressions of admiration were used with regard to the ladies, such as you would expect to hear when a toast is being replied to; but when we are discussing an important question like this—of so much importance that we do not know ourselves the extent of it—to speak in that strain is, I think, a mistake. I think we should have a little more argument and a little less sentiment. What is the argument, summed up? It really comes to this: The Hon. Mr. Jenkinson says, "If it is just at all that they should have it, it is just at present"; and the Hon. Mr. Oliver says, "Let justice be done." These are very fine sentiments, but they might have given the whole quotation—"Let justice be done though the heavens fall." That was really the position they took up; and we have only this satisfaction: If the heavens fall they will not have the opportunity of regretting their action. Then, Sir, we heard something about chivalry. I suppose it was the chivalry of the Middle Ages which was alluded to, when men used to ride forth and fight to the death simply because one man said his lady was more beautiful and more virtuous than another lady, when probably both were beautiful and both were virtuous. Is that the chivalry they were talking about? I should have liked to hear a little more on that point. But I say there is another kind of chivalry, and that is, to defend the weak and helpless, to stand forth in defence of truth and justice, to condemn the wrong and to defend the right; and I say that feeling, that spirit of chivalry, burns as brightly in the breasts of men to-day as it did in the Middle Ages, and burns as brightly in the breasts of those who oppose this female franchise as in the breasts of those who support it. It is because they have that spirit they do not like to see woman degraded

—they do not want to see her unsexed. The Hon. Mr. Jennings says it is all nonsense to speak about woman being unsexed, but I say it is possible to unsex woman by giving her the franchise. Sir, as those honourable gentlemen have given their opinion of woman, I may be pardoned if I give mine. I yield to no man in admiration of and respect for woman. I consider that woman is a combination of the excellences, with just a few faults that make her simply charming. And what do they want to do with her? They want to make her a female man; and yet they say they will not unsex her. The Hon. Mr. Oliver read a manifesto from the Governor of Wyoming. This manifesto showed that crime has decreased and there has been less poverty since the woman's franchise has come into force there. It is very satisfactory indeed to know that this has occurred since they have had woman's franchise there. There are many things I could speak of to the Council which have occurred since the deluge, but if I wanted to draw any conclusion from that I should show the connection between the two. So far as I heard, that manifesto did not say that was the result of women having the franchise. It said, since they had the franchise; and it is very possible there have been other conditions, and other circumstances, which have led to that prosperity, and the very pleasing state of affairs that exists there. But, supposing that woman's franchise has been a success in the State of Wyoming, and that the Governor of the State approves of it, what has that to do with New Zealand? What has it got to do with us? Conditions must be taken into consideration. The people in Utah have polygamy, and I have no doubt the elders there are very well pleased with polygamy, where they have three wives to hoe their potatoes and plant their cabbages; but is that any reason why we should have it here? None whatever. And then the simplicity of the Hon. Mr. Oliver! He says if women get the franchise they are only required to go periodically to the poll. Well, Sir, that surprised me. What about the committee meetings? When men are standing for Parliament, and standing in an interest that the women approve of, will not the women be on the committees? I should smile. And will they not attend public meetings?

An Hon. MEMBER.—They do that now.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—Yes, they do that now; and how do they behave when they get there? I propose to tell the Council how they behave when they get there. I remember that at the last general election in this City of Wellington an attempt was made—I am sorry to say, successfully—to prevent a candidate from addressing the people of this city. An organized gang there interrupted the speaker, and would not allow him to proceed. By-and-by partisans took it up, and they howled at one another from one side to the other, and the women howled amongst the loudest. And who swung their shawls round their heads and cheered also? The women. That shows what women will do under the influence of

a little excitement. It is quite possible that, that being so, if they get this vote they will go to the meetings and go electioneering, and we shall have a very undesirable class of men sent to the House. We shall have that sort of men who have come round this colony from time to time, and created a lot of excitement among the women, and in whom the women believe: I refer to such men as Clappett. I believe at election-times they will readily return men of that sort to the House, and I think it would be a very great pity indeed. What do women want to vote for? That is what I ask. What advantages do men possess that women do not possess? I know of none. I propose to show where women have a few advantages which men have not. According to the law as it stands at present, a woman can leave her husband and go away and live where she likes, and there is no power in the land to bring her back; but, if the husband does such a thing, what happens? The strong arm of the law stretches out and brings him back like a lamb to the fold—or a sheep to the slaughter. Then, a woman can hold property in her own right; yet by her extravagance she may ruin her husband. Then, the hours of labour of women are limited, but I know of no law in the colony that limits the hours of men. Then, she is not required to serve on juries and thus lose about 7s. a day. Neither can she be sworn in as a special constable. Now, I ask, if women have all these advantages, why do they want the vote? The vote is only a means towards an end. They have got all they want and ask for. Would they take the trouble to go to the poll simply to record a vote and lose time by going there if they have got all they want without it? I shall not say any more on this subject now, but I now come to this point—namely, the position of the recent additions to the Council. I was very much surprised to hear the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stewart. If members added to this Council were to come here pledged to support every measure brought forward by the Government, what would be the position? It would be that you would have men sworn to support the Government in everything they took up—right or wrong: men who were bribed by being offered a position. Supposing you go to any man and say, "Here are five different questions: I want to ask you if you can conscientiously support every one of these." He might reply that there were four which he could support conscientiously, but he could not support the fifth. Then they might go to another man who would support three and be against the other two; and another man might only be in favour of one, though he might be a very useful and capable man. It will be seen, therefore, that it would be almost impossible for a man coming here to retain his integrity and yet vote for every measure brought forward by the Government. Then, what do the words of the Hon. Mr. Stewart convey? That we are going to reject this Electoral Bill. I do not know how other honourable members feel upon this question, but I say nothing is further

from my mind than to reject the Bill; but I intend to improve it as much as I possibly can, and I think the best way I can help to improve it is by excising the clause giving the franchise to women. I have no wish to reject the Government measure, but I think I shall be best serving the interests of the country by rejecting the woman's franchise. Something has been said about the probable effect upon parties. I do not think, myself, that parties would be much affected by the change; but one of the questions we have for some time past been endeavouring to solve is what is termed the social problem, and we have been going in that direction as rapidly as we can with safety. I should not like to see any action taken that might mar our efforts and throw us back a number of years; and that is another reason why I object to this woman's franchise. I think, myself, it is just possible that, because we have introduced a certain measure which has been a success, our inclination may lead us to immediately "go one better," and follow it up regardless of consequences. It takes us all our time as men to restrain ourselves; and what might be the result with women, who, as I have said, are subject to excitement? I feel that the women might, under the influence of excitement, possibly return to the House most undesirable persons, who might go a little faster than other men would be inclined to go under ordinary circumstances. Therefore I would say to the working-men of this colony, As things are going now they are going very satisfactorily. The stage we have arrived at is a very satisfactory one, and we should not take any hasty action that would be likely to disturb that, and bring about a downfall. Then, the Hon. Mr. MacGregor said that woman has other spheres than her domestic sphere. I dare say she has, but I think she has only one proper sphere, and that is home. I can quite understand, if we were not to improve at all, if the competitive system were still to go on amongst the wage-earners, and if things were to be conducted as we see now—little boys and girls fighting together in the streets in their efforts to sell a person a newspaper—that women should be allowed to vote, and that they should have seats in the Legislature. I can even conceive that under those circumstances, instead of having such parties as we term them,—the Liberal and Conservative parties,—we might have a party of men on the one side, and women on the other, fighting against each other in their separate interests. On the other hand, I can imagine a better state of civilisation, in which all who are willing to work shall have work, and shall not work for a mere pittance, but shall be given sufficient to enable them to enjoy the luxuries and pleasures of life, and to provide for their old age, and to enable young men to marry and have families, and keep those families: not as now, when we find men walking about the streets because they are unable to get bread, dependent upon what their children can do for bare existence. I can imagine a

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state of civilisation in which women would not want to vote, and a great many men would not want to vote; when the making of laws and giving of just judgments might be left to the wise men of the community as it was in the Old England of the fifth century. I now come to the question of the responsibility that rests upon us. The Hon. Mr. Walker was most impressive in this respect, and I entirely agree with every word he said. It is impossible that we can overrate the responsibility that is placed upon us at the present time. To pass this measure now, and attempt to bring it into force at the next election, is a very great step to take. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the question may be, it must be clear that an attempt to put a large number of women—one hundred and thirty thousand—on the rolls in two months must lead to confusion, and I would ask honourable members to consider what might follow,—what consequences might arise from this innovation. What will be the effect upon the minds of our English creditors when they come to know what we have done—when they read the debate that has taken place in this Council, and recognise that this question has never been before the country in a proper form; when they recognise that it has been brought forward by an energetic and earnest man, and that it has been taken up by certain religious sects and temperance bodies, and that the people have never spoken their mind upon it? They will say that they cannot tell the day or the hour when we may in the same revolutionary manner bring into force here other measures which may be as disastrous as it is possible for this to be. I refer to the single-tax, which means confiscation, and I have given it a little study. I have never met a consistent single-taxer who would deny that. If that were attempted to be brought into force in the manner this is, there would be a howl from one end of New Zealand to the other; but because the franchise has been taken up and introduced by an energetic and earnest gentleman, and because he is prepared to give the women a vote without a seat, it has gone much further than it would otherwise have gone. Had it come before us in any other way I feel quite certain what the result would have been. I said on the last occasion that the question should go before the constituents, and I say so now. It should be placed before the country, and introduced into the Legislature in a proper form, and then, if it is the will of the majority that it should become law, I shall bow to the decision of the people and accept the inevitable.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I am not going to inflict a long speech on honourable members at this late hour. I am not going to take them to Wyoming to see the great spectacle of what the ladies have done for that country. Neither am I going to refer to other parts of the world, as has been done by other honourable members this afternoon. There has been a sort of scolding tone throughout this debate this afternoon, so that I began to think that things must be

in a bad way, and that the supporters of this measure were going to lose it. I was very glad that my honourable friend Dr. Pollen, whom every one delights to hear speak, took the debate out of the scolding state and raised it above that. With regard to the speeches delivered by some honourable members, they would have been very nice after-dinner speeches when proposing the toast of "The Ladies"; but I am not going to follow their example. I am what has been described as one of those unreasonable men who are not going to vote for this Bill on the present occasion; and, Sir, notwithstanding all that has been said in favour of the Bill, I say that no one in this Council is justified in voting for it on the eve of an election. The last days of Parliament are not the time to pass such a measure as this. I am quite sure that no man, whoever he may be, could have any idea of what the effect of this Bill would be until it was brought into operation. I noticed with regret the remarks of the Hon. Mr. Stewart regarding the attitude of some of the new members on this question. I say it is a credit to any Government to have put men into this Council and not to have bound them to vote in any particular direction, but to have left them to their own free-will. There must have been something in the previous conduct of members that they should be exalted into this Council without any demand being made upon them to vote for a particular measure. When those honourable gentlemen come here and see how Bills are dealt with, how they go before Committees, how they are investigated—when they see that measures are dealt with on their merits here, apart from party considerations—there may be party Bills and some feeling may be got up over them—they will realise how little party influences the business in this Council. They will see that when Bills come to this Chamber they are carefully dealt with, and sent back to the other place a much greater credit to the Legislature than they were when they came here. In the other place it is very much as Lord Palmerston said: "I do not care for the man who supports me when I am right; what I want is the man who supports me when I am wrong." Those honourable members will see that when there has been a clause forced into a Bill by a party vote the Bill comes here and is investigated and the matter put right, and it goes back to the other place a much more perfect measure. So that, if the Government had pledged those honourable gentlemen to support everything that they did, what should we think of men who would agree to come here on such terms? Depend upon it, a pledge of that sort never comes to any good. Now, a great deal has been said about this question having been before the constituencies. Well, that is the very thing I object to—the way in which a great question like this has been brought into prominence. A candidate on the hustings is asked if he is in favour of woman's suffrage. "Oh! yes," he says, in the belief that there are plenty of people against the granting of it to insure its

defeat; but when he comes here he finds this measure is brought forward, and he finds it necessary to adhere to his promise. That is not the way to bring into prominence a great question like this. No doubt it has been before the country for years; but, as one honourable gentleman said, so has the single tax: it has never been brought before the country yet as the principal question at the time of the general election. Let it go to a general election and let us have the voice of the people upon it. I for one will not stand in the way of any great reform so long as the people have an opportunity of deciding whether they want it or not, and pronounce upon it with no uncertain sound. Now as to what the Government has done in taking it up. They see a matter being promoted, they see it becoming popular, and, of course, they want to "go one better"; and they take up the question. It is like a wave of feeling coming along and carrying the people with it, when those who show themselves ready to give practical shape to it get great credit for doing so. But we have known questions to meet with the approval of the electors, and afterwards take a contrary turn; and what is this Council for? It is here to prevent hasty legislation, and to insure its being submitted to the country; and that is the course I advocate on the present occasion. Now, it is said that women who enter into politics will neglect their own household, and no doubt honourable members have seen among their friends the case of a mother of a family who goes to meetings and takes an active interest in politics—if they search into the working of that family circle they will have seen that family subjected to neglect. Sir, I am going to endeavour to stop the franchise, but, should it become law, I can see the difficulty the passing of it will create, so near a general election. I think, myself, it is not in woman's own interest, and that she will be far better off without the vote. I have been asked, myself, when on the hustings, whether I was in favour of woman's franchise, and my direct answer has been always No, and still I was always elected. I never beat about the bush; but if I find that it is the will of the country that this franchise should be given to women then you will not find me standing in the way. There has been a good deal said about women having seats in the House. It has been said that, if you are going to give them the vote, they have a right to a seat in Parliament; and for my own part I see no reason why women should not have a seat in the House if they are given the vote. There is now, however, this great question: We all know that the stability of the country depends upon the careful nursing of its finances. What has brought about all this trouble in the Australian Colonies? Has it not been the Government finance? The whole of the trouble has arisen through their bad management of finance. And so will trouble arise in this or any country when the Government neglect to keep their revenue equal to their expenditure. The women support the prohibitionists; they

would abolish the liquor traffic. Well, in that they have my sympathy, and, indeed, I have done a great deal to help them. But I would draw the line at a certain point. Have they ever considered, when they are talking about the abolition of the liquor traffic, the amount of revenue they are bound to give up, and how they are to replace it? I am quite sure not one woman in a thousand ever gave it a thought. I said when I rose, Sir, that I was not going to say much on this question. I now urge the Council to do its duty, on the eve of a general election, by sending the question to the country, so as to enable us to get the opinion of the people upon it.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—Since this Bill was introduced last session certain alterations have taken place in the mind of Ministers or of the other branch of the Legislature with regard to the provisions it is desirable to incorporate in the Electoral Act. There are two or three of them that appear to me to be of importance, but I do not intend to spend much time on that part of the subject. I would merely refer to provisions in clause 13, under which are imposed heavy penalties upon any one who may be so unfortunately situated that his name appears on more than one roll at one time. I think it should be more the duty of the public officers to remove those names from the roll, rather than that a person who is considered to be "a free and independent elector," should be charged with such a heavy responsibility, and placed under such a heavy penalty. Such provisions appear to me to be entirely at variance with the view that the electoral franchise is a right. Still more do I object to another provision later on in the Bill, where persons who are prevented by either absence, accident, or sickness from voting—I may say, the halt, the maimed, and the sick—are to be struck off the roll should they not have exercised their vote at the last election. Then in the face of such a proposal I hear my honourable friends all round me talking about the electoral franchise as "a right." Provisions of this sort have received the name of purifications of the roll. I submit it would be far better, and it would not be difficult, to devise some better means than this for the purification of the rolls. I am not going any further into this question at present. The discussion in general has been a most interesting one. My contribution to it will be very small, and such as it is it will be simply to take the opportunity of placing before those honourable gentlemen who are new to this Council the reasons that actuated us last year, and the steps taken by the Council with regard to the electoral rights of women. Before going into this: I think the discussion has been most interesting; at all events, it appeared so to me in some respects; and, in listening to the remarks of honourable members, one fact came under my notice which I wish to mention. My honourable friend Dr. Pollen has expressed his profound and entire belief in the insincerity of the Government were regard to this measure. An honourable member who has just spoken—

Hon. Mr. McLean

the Hon. Mr. Rigg—has informed us that the Government were absolutely sincere, so much so that they have actually incorporated in the Bill the women's franchise for the purpose of enabling the rest of the Bill to be carried. Sir, the electoral-right system for women was introduced at my instigation into the Electoral Bill of last year, and it led to a lengthy discussion and difference of opinion between the two Chambers. For my action the reason was as follows: It became perfectly clear to me that there would be a practical inequality in the exercise of the vote between those women who possessed the franchise in the towns and suburbs and those who possessed it in the country. I am not much given, in public affairs and on matters of legislation, to allow mere questions of sentiment to come in. One ounce of practice is worth all the sentiment that we are likely to meet with. I submit, as I submitted then, that there is no practical equality. The whole question was most fully discussed at the Conference. I might say that many attempts were made, by the Hon. Mr. Oliver and others, at that Conference to arrive at a settlement; and they will agree with me in saying that a more futile attempt to answer the argument of practical inequality could not possibly be conceived than was made by those who opposed the issue of the electoral rights on that occasion. Amongst other things, I urged that the conditions attending the use of the woman's vote in the country were essentially impossible conditions. We have settlers in the country districts whose wives would be absolutely unable to go to a poll, and I may say that I was informed by the other side, representing the House, that a neighbour would always take charge of the children. I might say that the neighbour would be going to the poll too, and in order to carry out this proposal there would have to be something like a baby-farm for the occasion. It is quite impossible to understand how neighbours could attend to the children. We were told that the proper way to meet the case would be to establish polling-places at every distance of five miles. That was in compromise of the matter, but it was no solution of the practical difficulty. There were a number of other attempts to come to agreement, but they all failed. It was urged that an attempt was being made to interfere with the secrecy of the ballot. From time to time, and from day to day, we were met with this objection. But it is a pure myth, and no one could be more convinced of that than the Managers on the other side themselves. But it is not my intention to detain the Council at any length with reference to this matter. As regards the course we took last year, I am not going to vote on any occasion for this franchise to women unless this practical equality is given between the towns and the country. And I say at once that nothing will ever induce me to do so, because I feel that to offer the women residing in the country this pretended privilege would be merely throwing in their faces a mere mockery. Sir, with regard to the general question, I would say that, had it

not been for this, I should have felt myself able to give my support to the general principle of woman's franchise. I am aware that there are great uncertainties in the matter; there is a considerable amount of doubt as to how it would work. But this country appears to be a species of experimental garden, in which everything is tried, and all manner of new devices are brought into play, for the benefit of mankind; and therefore I have no doubt at all that this franchise will be carried through shortly, if not this session. Sir, the great mass of opinion upon this question can only amount to mere estimation—estimation of possibilities and estimation of probabilities. It is impossible for any one in his senses to say such-and-such a thing is certain to happen. It appears to me that almost all the views taken on either side are of the nature of prophecies. My honourable friend on the right prophesied the utter destruction of the liquor traffic, which, perhaps, would be an argument in favour of the franchise. Another argument urged has been that it will lead to the disorganization of the finances, and to the utter destruction of the financial position of the colony. Well, Sir, all these are prophecies, and, as I have not the gift of prophecy, I do not propose to offer any contribution to this mass of predictions which have been delivered. But it seems to me that, on all grounds of logical deduction, the argument is in favour of woman franchise. The arguments seem to be practically irresistible, and, having read everything at my disposal, I cannot make out that there is a logical case against it. With regard to this question of having electoral rights, if that had been done last year the woman's franchise would now be in force. I would say it has been for some years a matter of extreme astonishment to me that an intelligent people should not take steps to improve their political system, so that they need not continue the barbarous practice of going to the polls. I am perfectly satisfied that the good sense of the people of this colony will yet condemn that practice as being utterly unreasonable and extremely inconvenient and behind the times. I live in the full belief that the time is not far distant when my hope on this subject will be absolutely realised.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA.—Sir, I want to say a few words regarding the position taken up by the Natives in olden times in respect to this matter—that is, with regard to the position held by women. During a given month in each year the Natives used to assemble for the purpose of holding certain rites. They used to assemble much as we do now in the way we hold the annual sittings of Parliament. I will mention some of the ceremonies performed by them, in which the women were not allowed to join. The first is the ceremony performed when making war-canoes, and the rites and ceremonies performed by men before going to war, when they invoked the gods to give them courage to meet their enemies. There were also ceremonies performed in connection with

the building of carved houses and carved store-rooms, which ornamental buildings they erected as sights for their friends and for strangers. They also held ceremonies when building their large houses for holding their meetings in, and it was in those buildings that they stored away their arms and weapons of warfare. There were also ceremonies performed by the men in connection with the cultivation of land, in order that they might insure fruitful returns. These ceremonies were all sacred, and always performed solely by the men. The women were not allowed to join in or interfere with these ceremonies, and if any women were present they were not allowed to interfere, and it was taken as a bad omen if they did so. I will now enumerate some of the duties which women were required to perform. First, they had to prepare garments out of flax for their husbands and for their children. They also had to plait the different sorts of mats, and the finer kinds of mats that they used as bedding. They also had to make kits, in which to gather the food which they had to carry to their homes to feed their husbands and children. They also had to gather herbs for food, and break up firewood and carry it home. None of these duties that they had to perform were considered to be in any way sacred. This was the state of things when you arrived in these Islands, and when you came you introduced Christianity, and even then we saw that this same rule applied. No women were allowed to preach. There were no women ministers, neither did you allow them to appear in your assemblies. It is only within the last few years that the voices of fanatical women have been heard in the streets of Wellington and Gisborne and other places. This has considerably puzzled us. We do not know whether the old rule was the correct one, or whether this is the right thing. Now, I wonder whether the Maori women are included in the provisions of this Bill now under consideration. Up to the present time we do not know whether the Maori women wish to have the privilege that is proposed to be given in this Bill. As far as I am aware, there have been no petitions from the Maori women addressed to Parliament, and no members of Parliament have received any letters from the Maori women asking to be allowed to vote. I have not seen any petitions from the Maori women to this House, such as have been laid upon the table from the European women, and as the one that is standing up yonder now. Every law that I have yet seen has had some sting contained in it, and it is possible that if the Maori women are included in this measure some burdens may be laid upon them which they have no idea of at present. I do not wish to speak at any length about this matter. I hope that it will be allowed to stand over until next year, so that we may hear whether these women wish to have this privilege or not. I am speaking, of course, more particularly with regard to the Maori women.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY.—Sir, I have a few words to say upon this question; but, before

Hon. Major Wahawaha

I enter into the main question, I must reply to a few remarks made by a member of this Council as to the conduct of new members. I refer to the Hon. Mr. Stewart. I have known that gentleman for some time, and not only here, but in another place, and there was no greater party-man, I suppose, existing than he was. He was always ready, at his party's call, to sacrifice his own convictions and devote himself to party duty. He assumes the position of an old member of this Council, and he takes upon himself the duty of lecturing the new members as to what they should do on a question of constitutional and party government. I never heard that he was a very brilliant authority on these questions himself. I think my colleagues are quite capable themselves of expressing an opinion upon this question, and on all constitutional questions, without special instructions from the other side. I think, therefore, that his remarks were altogether out of place, because when we first took up our position in this Council we were received with a very great deal of kindness, and we were told by several honourable gentlemen that such a thing as party never influenced members in this Council. And yet we find honourable members voting as party-men, and myself and those who came in with me are referred to as party-men by this member of the Opposition. I will not deal any more with this question, because it has nearly all been disposed of by members of the Council who have preceded me. As to this general question of enfranchising women, this is not the first time this matter has been before us. I myself have very strong convictions respecting it. I will first refer to the aspect of it from a constitutional point of view. We have been told, Sir, that the Councillors lately appointed must vote for this measure, because it is a party measure brought in by the Government. I think I am prepared to show that it has not been treated in that sense as a party measure. It is a measure that is one of a great many other measures that the Government wish to pass. It is one of those open questions on which members of a party can reasonably differ, and is in no sense one of those questions on which the existence of a Government depends. This question of the admission of women to the franchise was first brought into Parliament in 1891. It was brought in then by a private member in another place, but was not heard of except as a theoretical question till that period. It was certainly carried in that branch of the Legislature, on division, by 46 to 21, including "pairs." Its next appearance was in the Electoral Bill brought in by the Ballance Government in 1892, and any member of this Council who will read the debate on that occasion will find that it was introduced by the late Premier in a way that does not signify that it was a question on which the party were called upon to vote at all hazards. The late Mr. Ballance devoted a few words to it as a new feature which had been introduced, and hoped it would be carried;

and he also admitted that if women were entitled to vote they were also logically entitled to seats in the House. The next stage was its introduction this year by the Premier in the Bill now before the Council, and he said, in a few words, that the franchise was to be given to women, and the electoral right to seamen—they are coupled together as matters of no great importance. Then, if we refer to the Governor's Speech, we find no special reference to it. The Electoral Bill is referred to, without any reference to woman's franchise, and it is coupled with the Resident Magistrates' and District Courts Bills. Therefore we see, from all those statements, that it never assumed the position which a measure should assume that is urged strongly year after year by the country on this Council. Then, I would state how, in my opinion, this question came to such prominence lately in the House. It has been worked up, in my opinion, entirely by the temperance party. I think it has come to the front through earnest advocates lecturing throughout the country urging temperance, and coupling with it woman's franchise for the purpose of carrying the temperance question. I think that is the way it has come to the front, and members in another place, fearing, perhaps, that their seats were in danger, took it up, without that thought which the question was entitled to. Now, it has been said during the debate that woman has a right to this, logically. Well, perhaps she has; I do not question that at all. But this is not a question of logic; it is a question of feeling and sentiment entirely, as most large political and religious questions are. We must admit, if this question of the women's suffrage is essentially necessary, that man in the past has been, politically and otherwise, a failure. Now, I do not think, myself, that is a correct conclusion; and I think any person who will reflect upon what man has done, even within our own lifetime, will be convinced that that conclusion cannot be upheld. I will just enumerate a few things that man has done in the scientific and material world. He has developed steam-power, introduced lighting by gas, telegraphy by sea and land, photography, the spectroscope, the telephone and the phonograph, the electric light and electric motive-power. Those are only a few of the things he has done during the last fifty years. Then, again, he has produced colours and essences from gas-tar, discovered disease-germs, and by the application of the knowledge thus acquired he has increased the happiness of mankind. In the political world he has also removed religious disabilities, removed class disabilities, removed woman's disabilities in many directions, provided cheap food for the people; introduced vote by ballot, manhood-suffrage, protection of women and children, protection of the sick and destitute, free education; promoted temperance and Christianity; and made sincere attempts to deal with the question of poverty amongst the people. To say, therefore, that man has been a failure politically is, to my mind, to say what is directly contrary to the fact, and I

contend that there is, therefore, no necessity to call in wise woman as an adviser. Women, indeed, should be proud of being the mothers of men who have done such things for the world. If this great work is not progress in its true sense, then I do not know what progress is. Now, it is proposed to add to the electoral roll a hundred and thirty thousand women, who have had no political training. It must be admitted that such a thing as this constitutes a great revolution. It was not thus that man obtained political power; he had a period of severe probation, and gradually acquired the extended franchise. I deny entirely that the people of the country have demanded this revolutionary change. I know, speaking for my own district, the question is sometimes entertained in a jocular manner at public meetings. But as for the real feeling of the public—men and women—I say not one-fourth of them desire it. What evidence have we got? It is true a few petitions have been presented to both branches of the Legislature. I do not pretend to say whether they are genuine or not, but I know how petitions are got up. The number of signatures depends a great deal on the industry of the collectors. You could get people to sign a petition for almost anything. I have no doubt that if one went round with a petition for the purpose of doing away with the honorarium one would get a very large number of signatures. If you went round with a petition to do away with this Chamber, you would no doubt get a large number of signatures also. Could that be taken as evidence that the people of the colony really desired these things? I should say, Certainly not. I do not say I would absolutely refuse to grant this franchise; I should be inclined to give it if the country really demanded it; but we are granting it now without getting the opinion of the country, and my advice is, to tide it over till after the general election. I have already given notice of an amendment with that view. Woman is now respected and honoured as the queen of the household, and that is her proper place. We have lifted her on a moral pedestal, and I should be sorry to see her dragged from it into the arena of politics. My own experience of politics has been, that woman will not improve herself or increase her happiness by taking part in political questions. If woman becomes a politician, we may yet have a conflict between the sexes, and, in that case, we know the weaker will go to the wall. Though I say I should not refuse the vote, I wish to hear the strong voice of the country asking for it before we deal with it. Take all the great political questions—such as the repeal of the corn-laws, Catholic emancipation, and, in our own colony, the abolition of the provinces: these were all brought forward and dealt with on account of the voice of the people being clamorous for these reforms. I hope the Council will pause before giving immediate effect to this great change. I will move, in Committee, a proviso that it shall not come into operation before next session, and if that be carried the Bill will have my ardent support.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—So much has been said on this Bill that I do not intend to take up the time of the Council for more than a few moments. I fear that so many honourable members have addressed themselves solely to this question of woman's franchise that the other features of the Bill have been overlooked; and, although, necessarily, any objections must be, to a large extent, Committee objections, I think it is only proper to indicate them on the second reading, so that they may be considered when we get into Committee. I take it as granted that the second reading of the Bill will pass, and that all these questions will therefore be dealt with in Committee. It has always been understood that the great object of an Electoral Bill is to secure to every person who is entitled to vote the right to vote, and to give them every shape and form of facility for doing this. I do not think this measure does so. There are two or three points I should just hastily mention, without dwelling on them at all. This Bill, I see in the interpretation clause, professes to give leaseholders and freeholders a non-residential qualification. The interpretation clause says, "‘Non-residential qualification’ means a freehold or leasehold qualification under this Act, of which residence forms no part." I have carefully looked through the Bill, and I do not see that any leaseholder has a right to vote at all.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—That is a misprint. It was left in by mistake.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—I think it must be, for I could find no reference to it elsewhere. In Part I. there is the provision that a person holding property of the value of £25 is entitled to be registered, and every person of the age of twenty-one years residing in the colony is also entitled to be registered. I take it from that that a freeholder is to get special privileges; but, further on, I find that a person who owns property and pays rates and taxes is in no better position than any other person. Although he may own property in every district in the colony, he is only allowed to register upon one electoral roll. Well, he is obliged to make a selection as to which roll he shall be registered on before any election comes on, because if he allows his name to be placed on more than one roll—as was pointed out by the Hon. Mr. Oliver—he is immediately subject to a fine of £5 for his name being on more than one roll. The consequence is that he is not in so good a position as the man with a residential qualification, because he has to declare which roll he will be on; and, no matter how he wishes to vote, or in what direction, if he allows it to remain on more than one roll he has simply to be put in gaol, or fined—I am not quite sure he must not be put in gaol. In regard to this question of residence qualification, I find, in looking at clause 18, that, although a man is supposed to have resided in a district for three months before being entitled to be registered, still, if at any time after he has done so he has been within the district for six days within the six months immediately pre-

ceding an election, he is entitled to vote. That I do not think is a fair or a just thing at all, and it is a matter which wants looking into. Then, again, we find, with all our anxiety to get proper rolls, and to get all the electors on our rolls, it is provided that any person absent from the colony for a year is to be immediately struck off the roll. It is true he can re-register; but what a lot of trouble and worry that entails, and how many persons would neglect to do it! If we want to have our rolls complete we should not put such a number of restrictions as will disfranchise a number of most estimable people. These are things that, I think, ought to be looked after in Committee. And then, again, we have this other penalty imposed: that if a man does not vote—it matters not from what reason—if he is sick or away—if he does not vote at any election his name can be struck off the roll. It seems to me to be the disqualification of electors, instead of the qualification. I do not think it is just at all. However, I only wanted to draw attention to these things before we go into Committee, so that honourable members may give them consideration, and when we go over the Bill clause by clause they can be altered. With reference to the burning question of giving the right to women to vote, one feels a little puzzled from the very different arguments one hears from those supporting the measure. We are told on the one hand it is such an important question—going to double the voting-power of the colony. It is an experiment of the most extreme character—I think I am justified in saying—that, because I do not think any person on either side can say what is going to be the result of such a power being given, if the Legislature thinks proper to grant it. I say that, if there was ever a question upon which this Council ought to exercise careful judgment it is upon a question of doubling the number of votes throughout the colony,—of giving voting-power to one hundred and thirty thousand women to exercise—a power they are not accustomed to exercise, and which they do not care to exercise when they have the power. I speak now of municipal elections, where women are allowed to vote; and I know the extreme difficulty of getting women to come and vote: they will not come unless some special friend is sent to bring them and accompany them to the poll, and then it is as much as you can do to get them to vote. Sir, I say we have had no test whatever of what is likely to be the consequence of this. I say this requires the exercise of exceptional prudence, and I think, if this Council is to be a useful check in matters of importance, this is one of those cases in which the Council should stand to its guns and do its duty irrespective of all outside pressure that may be brought to bear on it, and, at all events, allow sufficient time to elapse to enable the country to give full expression to its opinion at the next elections. Of course, as I said at first, I am in somewhat of a difficulty, because one section of those supporting the Bill say the matter has been before the country

for years, and therefore all difficulty on that score is removed. Replying to that, I say the question of woman's franchise has never been within the reach of practical politics till this Parliament met, and it was only after this Parliament met that it was brought under the consideration of the Legislative Council as within the arena of practical politics. Before, it was talked of, like many other things, but never reduced to a serious matter, but treated more as a matter of joke than of practical politics. That is my reply to that statement. The Hon. Mr. Montgomery and others say—and I think the Hon. Mr. MacGregor admitted—that there is no great weight to be attached to the petitions that are lying on our table; that no doubt many of the women do not desire the franchise; that they could not say that the country had expressed a desire for, and that the bulk of women have never expressed a desire for, this extension; but that, if the thing was right, without any expression of opinion from the country we should do it. Well, if I were satisfied it was right, I might be with them; but I say, in such a vital change, which may have the gravest bearing on the whole future of the colony, and which, if once introduced, we should never be able to get back—I say on such a momentous question this Council should pause, and should exercise the greatest care and caution, and should not act without a most distinct and unmistakable expression of opinion from the country, given in such a way that we could not possibly misunderstand it. We have had no such expression; we have had no opportunity for it. This thing has been sent to us by the other House twice! That is nothing; that is no expression of opinion from the public; and therefore we should hesitate before we take such a step as we cannot possibly retrace. It has been said by some one that if we are dissatisfied with it we can take it back; but that would never be done. Once we grant this, it is on the statute-book, and there it will remain. And another thing is that, if those people who support this extension so strongly are at all consistent, it must follow that this clause which says that women shall have no right to a seat in Parliament must go right out at once. If we give them a vote they are thereby entitled to hold a seat in Parliament. So much has been said about it that I am really not going to enter into the question of sentiment which has been so freely permeating this Chamber this afternoon. Really, at one time I felt almost ashamed of being a man—I felt I ought to be a woman, seeing the general condemnation of man. This is all superficial talk, to my mind. There is certainly not a man in the Council who does not recognise to the utmost the good qualities, the noble qualities, of woman; and I say that those of us who entertain the highest respect for women are, to my mind, those who are most strongly opposed to this measure; because they do not wish to see her dragged down from her present lofty position, in which she exercises such influence on men, and indirectly on politics—they do not wish to see

her brought down and mixed up with public meetings, committee meetings, and going to the poll. We know what they are: once let a woman get warmly into a thing, and she gets, owing to her naturally impulsive disposition, in such a condition that she will work to death for it. Let us keep her in her high position, and not let her be dragged down to the level she would come to if mixed up with these things. One is apt to get led away, but I could not help feeling that there was a great deal of truth in what has been said; that if you go into some households where there are some very active-minded ladies—such as Mrs. Jel-laby, who took an interest in the Borrioboola-Gha natives or something or other, and devoted her whole time to circulars, and so on, and making up clothes, while her own children were going about starving, and naked, and tumbling down stairs in all sorts of misery—you will find reason for hesitation with regard to such a measure as this. I say women's duties are of another kind. She has been afforded more opportunity during the last few years for occupying positions before exclusively occupied by men; and if we give women more time for consideration and opportunity to educate themselves to look into public matters, there will be plenty of time to consider a few years hence, if we find the thing desirable. But for the present, on the eve of a general election, when it is almost impossible to get the electoral rolls properly prepared; and when it is utterly impossible to get the women of the colony to understand their position, I say, if members allow this measure to come into force before the election, they will fail in their duty to the country, to the electors, and to the Council.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Sir, the debate has now occupied some considerable time, and has, no doubt, wearied honourable members. I propose to be as brief as possible, and, indeed, I should probably have contented myself with saying nothing, because I have nothing to answer, had I not thought I should be wanting in courtesy to many honourable members if I did not refer to some of the speeches we have had the pleasure of listening to. I never felt in a more awkward and difficult position than I do on this occasion, because no one, with the exception of the last speaker and the Hon. Mr. MacGregor, to whose able speech we all listened with so much pleasure, has touched upon any part of the Bill with the exception of two or three words. Were it not for these three words the Bill would have had a very easy passage through this Chamber, we should have been saved a great deal of trouble, and should probably now be in Committee and finishing the whole proceeding. I am, however, about to notice one or two of the speeches to which we have listened; and in the first instance I shall refer to one or two remarks which fell from my honourable and gallant friend who, I regret, is not in his place. He was pleased to say that we should deal with this question on its own merits: and there I

am not at all disposed to differ from him. But we find woman in the Bill, and we are obliged to deal with her, and I have not the slightest doubt she will have a place there when the Bill leaves this Chamber, and that she will be found on the statute-book of the country. I have listened with pleasure to the speeches made for and against her, and I am bound to say she has in no way suffered, even from those who are not disposed to give her the franchise. I also heard my honourable and gallant friend say that we were experimenting to a great extent in the legislation of this country. In every new country experiments have to be made. We have made them in this country, and with some pride and satisfaction. In every new country we find chaos, and we bring nothing with us except the traditions of our old homes; and wherever we have made experiments we have usually been successful: so successful, in fact, have we been in New Zealand that the legislators of nearly all the adjoining colonies have sent for copies of our laws within the last two years; and in this morning's newspaper may be seen a telegram wherein it appears that in the British Parliament they are disposed to follow our lead. I was about, Sir, to refer to what I consider to be ungenerous on the part of an old soldier in not giving to woman that praise which she merited on the battlefield. The honourable gentleman said—and I hope he will correct me if I am wrong—that women were unfit to bear the severities incidental to the duties of soldiers. One honourable gentleman referred to the Spartan mother; and I would refer to an occasion when women defended the walls of the City of the Violated Treaty, as it is called, and repulsed the invading army—one of the greatest armies, perhaps, that ever invaded Ireland. So much for my honourable and gallant friend's ungenerousness to women. Now, my honourable friend Mr. Walker took a good deal of trouble with regard to my own views. I should just like to say a word or two to him upon this particular occasion and on this particular question. My honourable friend who sits beside me informed the Council that this was not a party question. How on earth could it be a party question? We see parties in another place mixed up on this point, as they are mixed up here. I will tell my honourable friend this: that, with the exception of my own self, every member of the Cabinet is an ardent supporter of the women's franchise, but I have never ceased to hold my own opinion on the question. Seeing, however, that it has come up to us on more than one occasion from another place, and seeing that the voice of the people is represented by that Chamber, I said that I should be a stubborn and an obstinate man if I resisted what the voice of the country demanded. I have said that before, and I say it again; but, nevertheless, I hold my own opinions as to the result. I was going to say this to my honourable friend: If the country declares that woman has a right to the franchise, I will go the whole length of declaring that she also

has a right to sit in this Legislature. I am quite prepared to go that length, because I am quite sure some people who have come to the age of my honourable friend and myself will have very little chance in opposition to them, and must be prepared to submit to the inevitable. At any rate, that is the proper logical sequence, and therefore I say, if they are to have the electoral right, they have also the right to sit in this Parliament. Now, I have one or two remarks to make about my honourable friend Mr. Oliver's speech. Sir, I would remind that honourable gentleman that people who attack Governments should have very good memories. In his speech he was pleased to say that the reason why this Bill was not carried, and why it did not become law on a recent occasion when it was before the Legislature, was entirely due to the Government. Now, when the Women's Franchise Bill came into this Chamber my honourable friend was first and foremost in declaring that there was nothing degrading in woman going to the poll—that her presence would smooth away the asperities and roughnesses peculiar to these occasions, and that, in short, everything of the most delightful character would be done when she went to the poll, and there was nothing degrading in it. But when this provision for the women's franchise was introduced into the Electoral Bill of last year, and came up to this Chamber, who was it that surrounded the question with every possible difficulty? My honourable friend himself. Every possible difficulty that could be placed in the way was interposed and hedged around it while it was in Committee. I told the honourable gentleman on that occasion, as I did on other occasions, that I would have the Bill as it stood or I would have nothing, and that the honourable gentleman would kill the Bill by what he was doing, and that I was quite sure the amendments he proposed would not be accepted in another place. But, Sir, he disregarded all my representations, and insisted upon hedging the Bill around with electoral rights and every sort of difficulty. And yet now he has—well, I will say—the courage to assert that the Government was entirely to blame for not passing the Bill, when, as I say, every difficulty was placed in the way of the Bill passing by the honourable gentleman and his friends. I cannot help admiring the fulsome adulation with which my honourable friend treats the new members of the Council. I wonder they have not resented it more than they have done. Amongst other things, he congratulates them, firstly, upon having the courage of their opinions; secondly, upon showing that they will not slavishly follow the Government; and thirdly, upon their absolute independence. The admirable speeches they have made prove them to be able members. They were received by this Council with warm congratulation; and what necessity is there, therefore, for this fulsome adulation, simply because they vote and speak in accordance with their convictions, as honourable men? What cause is there for any one to

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feel surprise at their absolute independence? But honourable gentlemen will notice how firm a phalanx his side present on every possible occasion when the necessity arises and when their interests are in common. Yet my honourable friend attacks the Government, and assures us at the same time that there is no party in the Council! I say there is a strong party in the Council. The honourable gentleman has not hesitated to ridicule what is known as the Liberal party, and I will challenge him to deny it. And yet he says there is no party in the Council! I am myself as strong a party-man as any one; and to try to persuade me that there is no party action in the Council is altogether vain, for I have occasionally seen it, and have defeated it too. My honourable friend said that he hailed with pleasure the granting of the electoral right to every one over the age of twenty-one years, and yet it was he himself who threw difficulties in the way of the passage of the Bill that was to confer this right. My honourable friend was foremost, as I have said, in the whole matter, assisted by those beside him. On the occasion to which I refer, I remember that there was a picture drawn of the farmer's wife—it was drawn again by the Hon. Mr. Stevens on this occasion, and his picture was one of the finest pieces of word-painting—a picture, I say, of the farmer's wife, who could not possibly leave her children and forsake her household duties in order to get to the poll. The poor factory-girl standing out in the rain and the cold, waiting at the poll for the opportunity to exercise her franchise, was also put into the picture. But all these were mere shields to enable the wealthier classes to vote from their firesides, and to enable that class who may be called “blue-stockings” to go round and try to influence the votes of the factory-girls and the farmers' wives, for whom so much consideration was professed. I know what sort of woman is the farmer's wife, and I never knew one of them hesitate to do what she thought right, even though to do it she had to face the weather when it poured with rain, or though she had to traverse a muddy road. Then, my honourable friend referred to clauses 8, 13, and 14 of the Bill; and he was practically, with the exception of the last speaker, the only honourable member who referred to the Bill at all. Clause 8 he objects to because the inmates of charitable institutions are to have the right to vote. Sir, I was sorry to hear such an expression fall from one who I know is animated by the kindest and best intentions, and, if I have spoken somewhat warmly of him in other respects, I have at the same time a sincere admiration for the honourable gentleman's excellent and amiable qualities. But I must say that I was shocked to find any member of the Council object for one moment, as he did, to give the right of the franchise to people who, through no fault of their own, are dependent upon our charitable institutions. Then, my honourable friend referred to clause 15 as being open to objection. But the principle contained in that clause is

quite right. We have established the principle of “one man one vote,” and we propose by this Bill to add to it that of “one man one roll.” Surely there can be nothing to hinder any one whose name appears on two or three rolls from taking the trouble to get his name erased from all but one, in order to prevent something mischievous happening. With regard to clause 14, the honourable gentleman takes very great exception to that clause, because it would be easy for men who were registered in District A to register also in District B by residing for one month there, where he says they may be basking in the sunshine of Ministerial favour. Fancy Ministerial favour being given to the poor devil of a labourer who happens to be working for a particular person at a particular time just prior to the election! My honourable friend referred to the fact that those who resisted these reforms had very little faith in humanity. Then, my honourable friend has very little faith in the humanity of the Government, for there he draws the line; and if these are the reforms by which we can enable the people more generally to exercise the franchise my honourable friend is very contradictory in his opinions. I have now said all I think I need say about the speech of my honourable friend. I now come to the very remarkable speech made by the Hon. Mr. Stewart to-night. It was a speech of scold and threat, and I regret that a gentleman of his experience should have used the language he did to the new members of the Council. He stated they were selected by the Government for a specific, particular purpose. I say positively, Sir, as a member of the Government, that many of those honourable gentlemen I never knew before they came here. They were selected because of their excellent qualities; because they had the courage of their opinions long before they entered the Council; because they expressed those opinions openly and on the platform; because they were selected by members of the people; and because they were men of high integrity. It was for these reasons that they were selected by the Government, by many members of which they had never been seen. I can only say that that selection gave to the country, as it did to the Council, general satisfaction; and I am astonished to find any member of this Council casting a reflection upon these honourable gentlemen by stating that a mandate had been given them to do simply what the Government desired them to do. There was an allegation made here not so very long ago casting a reflection on honourable gentlemen who entered this Chamber several years ago, and that allegation was never contradicted in this Chamber. It was stated that they had their marching-orders to do a certain thing. And, Sir, they did that thing. It is not for me to say how it was done. With regard to certain members being Government nominees, I say again that these new members came into this Chamber free and unfettered, and I, as a member of the Government, would be no party to asking any man to

vote in a particular way. I have never asked a man to vote for me yet. Now, my honourable friend Dr. Pollen was kind enough to threaten me with a repetition of a performance which he enacted on a former occasion. I hope he will not carry out that threat, for I have too much respect for him to resist that; but he did me the honour on a former occasion to take a Bill out of my hands because he had no confidence in the Government. I think he has altered his views, and will allow me to carry this Bill my own way. The Hon. Mr. Reynolds did me the honour to tell me that the Hon. Mr. Campbell Walker was the adviser of the Government. I can assure him he is not; because on every possible occasion when I want advice I seek advice from the honourable gentleman himself, and he generally gives it to me; but it is entirely wrong.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I said he was in the confidence of the Government.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—No, he is not. My honourable friend is always in my confidence. That he ought to know. Of course, I, like most honourable members, have listened to the very able speeches delivered in this debate, and I say the matter has been discussed from every possible point of view. I trust that when we go into Committee we shall make as few amendments as possible, if honourable members are sincere in allowing it to become the law of the country.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at twelve minutes to ten p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 24th August, 1893.

Old Soldiers' Claims—Mr. Earnshaw and the Government—Aliens Bill—Count-out.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

OLD SOLDIERS' CLAIMS.

Mr. R. THOMPSON brought up the report of the Waste Lands Committee upon the petition of B. E. Lambert and fifty-one others for grants of land for military services, and moved, That the report be referred to the Government for consideration.

Mr. PALMER looked upon this report as simply burking the old soldiers' claims. The Waste Lands Committee could do no more than report to the Government as they had done. There were many claims of old soldiers which required recognition. These men had fought and bled for the country, and last year a Committee was set up to inquire into these claims, and the Committee decided that where two distinct services had been performed the men should get two distinct payments. That recommendation had been absolutely disregarded up to the present time. He failed to see why, if a man had served in one war and afterwards

served in another, he should be subject to be told, "You are not to be paid for your second period of service." They might as well refuse to pay a man for digging their garden this year, because he was paid for digging it a year ago. That was the principle which was being acted on with regard to these old soldiers. He had got one claim which he would lay before the House. It was that of a poor unfortunate fellow named George Campbell. The letter this claimant received from the authorities said that they had the honour to inform him that no recommendation could be made in his case, because he was discharged without a good character. He had a communication from Mr. Gardiner and other settlers, showing that Campbell was one of the best settlers in the locality he lived in, that he was very old, and that it was very hard for him to eke out an existence. He was refused the land because he was discharged without a good character, and that discharge took place because once or twice he got intoxicated, and for that fault his claim was put aside. It seemed extraordinary that for a simple thing like that the country should get out of its obligations to this man, although he had fought and bled for his country. This was only one of many cases. He knew that nothing more would be done this session. It must be clearly understood that the old soldiers had wasted their time in sending in petitions, and he would advise them not to do it, because he saw no hope of justice being done them.

Mr. T. THOMPSON expressed his extreme regret that the very numerous petitions which had been received this session had met with such scant consideration. These old soldiers were men who deserved well of the country, and he assured the Government the matter would not be allowed to rest till their claims were settled. These petitions would come year after year unless some action was taken to give finality to the claims. As the last speaker had said, there were some very hard cases indeed. He himself had presented petitions from several men who were shut out through a mere technicality, and these men had done good service to the country. It was very hard that they should not have an opportunity of putting their claims fairly before the House. They need not expect anything further to be done this session, it had so far advanced; but he felt sure that those who came back to this House after next election would have the same difficulty to face, and they would have to face it every session until finality was given to these claims. The debarring of these claims was a gross act of injustice, and the claims would have to be met fully and fairly sooner or later. He had only to again express his regret that this matter had not been dealt with this session.

Mr. MCGUIRE said he was pleased that the discussion had taken place, as he was going to ask the Minister of Defence what steps the Government intended to take in order that old soldiers might receive the awards they were justly entitled to. Seeing that the Waste

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Lands Committee had reported, he thought the Government was bound to take the matter up, unless it was going to act in a most unjust way to these men, who had done good service to the country. He had sent in many applications to the Government, and he had presented many petitions to the House on behalf of old veterans, but he always received the same unsatisfactory answer. He would now tell the Defence Minister that unless the matter was taken in hand it would continually come up. And why should it not come up? It would come up until every just and equitable claim was settled. He considered it a blot on the name of New Zealand that year after year the consideration of these claims had been continually put off and many of the claims were not recognised at all. In the case of Colonel Stapp, a recommendation was made by the Committee—this gallant officer was to receive a certain amount; the case was referred to the Government for favourable consideration, but the Government gave it no consideration whatever, and this gentleman, who did great service for the country in the time of need, was forgotten in his old age. Then, again, there was Major Lusk, who had done good service for the country. He was selected for special service when the country was at war, and his claim had not been recognised at all. There were hundreds of other just claims, and many old soldiers had gone to paupers' graves after trying year after year to get their claims adjusted. Their claims were held back by the Government until, through old age, the whole of the old soldiers died out. He thought that was not fair nor honest, and he did not think it right the colony should neglect these parties. It ought to recompense them for the services they had rendered to the country in the time of need, and he therefore trusted that the Defence Minister would see his way to take steps in order to give what was proper to these men, and what they deserved according to the services rendered to the country. He therefore trusted the Defence Minister would answer him on this point, seeing that the Waste Lands Committee had referred these claims to the Government. He would tell the Defence Minister that he would still continue to urge that justice be done to these men while he remained a member of the House; for the old soldiers were men who deserved well of the country, and the Defence Minister should not debar them of their just claims. To do so would be an act of injustice.

Mr. TAYLOR could not entirely agree with the remarks made by the last speaker; but he was prepared to say this: Even in Canterbury they had a few of these old warriors alive yet, and he believed the Minister of Defence was quite prepared to do justice to all sections of the people. Why did the last speaker mention majors and colonels for consideration? He (Mr. Taylor) was dealing with the rank and file of these old soldiers. Those men whom the honourable gentleman had been speaking about just now had been amply paid—and that had been proved—for the services they

had rendered to the country. The honourable gentleman referred to majors and generals: he (Mr. Taylor) was referring to the rank and file—men who had possibly next to nothing to live upon; and he asked the Minister of Defence whether he would not consider the case of the claimants who lived down his way. The North Island monopolized the great bulk of these claims. Some of these old soldiers went down to Canterbury to live, and they were entirely ignored. He protested against that. He trusted the Minister of Defence would consider the claims which he had brought under his notice, and not notice the majors and generals referred to by the last speaker.

Mr. RHODES did not think there were a great many old soldiers pure and simple in Canterbury. No doubt there was some, as intimated by the honourable member for Christchurch City; but there was another class of persons in Canterbury who should have their rights, and these were the Volunteers. He had mentioned the Volunteers of Canterbury before this session. There was no doubt the law was perfectly clear. The Volunteers who enrolled before 1877, and subsequently completed six years' continuous service, were entitled to these grants. A number of these men sent in their claims, and they were wrongly shut out by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, whether by instruction of the Minister or not he did not know. It was strange that one of the claimants went to Kumara, sent in his application, and got his land. He believed the application was indorsed by the Minister of Defence, but he was not quite sure about that. But, anyhow, he got his land, being a constituent of the Minister of Defence. The Volunteers in Canterbury were equally entitled to land grants, and he would ask the Government to refer these claims back to Canterbury and ask the Commissioner to report upon them again, having previously shown to the Commissioner the section of this Act under which they were entitled. These men were, undoubtedly, and had been, shut out, and unfairly shut out, though they put in their applications within the time prescribed by the Act. He would press this matter continually until the just claims of these men were granted.

Mr. SEDDON might tell the honourable gentleman that those who lived in glass houses should not throw stones.

Mr. RHODES said he did not understand that.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman would probably understand it a little later on. He was not aware himself that there was anything special as regarded anybody in connection with Kumara. He believed himself that the case the honourable member for Geraldine referred to was reported upon by the Commissioner of Westland before he (Mr. Seddon) was Minister of Defence at all. At all events he was positive, as far as he was concerned, there had been no special concessions made. If there were differences in the interpretation of the Act by the Crown Lands

Commissioners in different provincial districts, the Government were not responsible for that. No instructions had been given to the Commissioners at all—they had simply carried out the law according to their lights; and he believed, himself, in the case referred to by the honourable member for Geraldine, it was against the law. That was his opinion. If the facts showed that a wrong had been done by any one Commissioner, to insist upon all the other Commissioners doing the same was very peculiar logic. All he said in reference to those old claims was that they had better clear up the applications they had received before they decided to keep open the door for the reception of other claims. He would consider himself bound very shortly to put upon the table of the House what had been the cost to the country, and the number of applications which had been received and dealt with. If they went on making the law wider and wider he did not know where it was going to end. The Government had dealt with this matter as fairly as possible in all its stages. The House last session said that after the 31st March no further applications should be received. Now they were urged by honourable members to keep it open for all time, and he could not agree to that.

Colonel FRASER thought the old soldiers had had plenty of time up to the 31st March last to send in their claims, and he did not want any of the claims which had been sent in too late to be recognised at all. He thought they ought to be put on one side. All he wanted done was that a Committee should be set up to review the decisions given by the Commissioners: such a course would satisfy all requirements and end the matter. If the Committee indorsed the opinions of the Commissioners, then there was an end of these claims for ever; but if the Commissioners, through pure technicalities in many instances, had excluded proper claims, the Committee could set such things right and put an end to these claims. He thought that until the decisions of the Commissioners had been reviewed there would never be an end to this business.

Mr. FISHER, referring to the remarks of the Minister of Defence, said he thought it nothing to the purpose to point out what the cost to the country had been or would be, because these men gave their services to the country under certain well-understood conditions. One condition was that they should receive either money-recompense or grants of land for their services, and he did not think it creditable to any Government that they should repudiate the just claims of the men who had so given their services. He would not deal with the report brought down by the Committee, because, after all, it was not a function of theirs to deal with a question like this. This was a Government function, and a Government function only. He simply rose to call attention to one omission from the report—for which the Committee were not to blame—an omission from the schedule of the name of William McKeever, a petitioner who claimed with the

Mr. Seddon

rest of these claimants. Possibly the omission occurred through McKeever being now a resident of Sydney, and through his petition having only recently been presented to the House. He hoped that, if the Government gave consideration to the claims which had been referred to, McKeever's claim would be considered along with the rest. If there were certain claims which still remained unsettled, he thought it would be wise on the part of the Government to bring in some Bill to finally determine how those claims should be dealt with, and to give whatever recompense the men were entitled to. It ought to be remembered that the number of claims was not an increasing number—it was always a diminishing number; and, these men having given their services to the colony, he thought it would be unwise and ungenerous on the part of the Government to refuse to recognise the claims, and especially to interpose technical objections to the recognition of those claims.

Mr. J. MILLS thought the suggestion of the honourable member for Te Aroha was well worthy of the attention of the Government. He quite agreed with the honourable member that it was time that the facilities for the admission of claims were terminated, and that any of those who had not already sent in their claims should be barred; but he thought a Committee should be set up to investigate the decisions of the Commissioners, because he knew, from his own experience, several cases where people who had sent in claims had been excluded entirely on technical grounds, and on grounds quite unworthy of the Commissioners. These were cases which could be dealt with by a Committee of the House on their merits, apart from technical objections, and thus set at rest once and for ever. He felt sure that, if these claims were set at rest, it would relieve many honourable members of a great deal of worry, because it was difficult to satisfy individual constituents who pressed these claims that the best had been done that could have been done. These claimants believed they had just claims, and could not understand why they were ignored on purely technical grounds.

Mr. DUNCAN thought the suggestion made by the honourable member for Te Aroha was a proper one. A number of claims had been referred to by honourable members, but he would mention one of a different character. It was the case of a gentleman now residing in Oamaru, who came to New Zealand and served in the military service in the Auckland Province. He received his scrip, but he gave it to a surveyor, with the idea that he should choose the land. The surveyor, however, lost the scrip, and it had never been exercised, so that he had been shut out. The law only provided that scrip might be renewed if it could be proved that it had been burned or destroyed. In this case it was proved that the scrip was issued, and that it had never been exercised. The case was that of Mr. E. Harding, watchmaker, of Oamaru. He thought that a Committee should be set up to deal with such

cases. It was only just to this man that he should get his scrip. He trusted a Committee would be set up, if not this session, at any rate in the first session of the new Parliament, to deal with these cases, as it was a disgrace to deal in a niggardly way with those who risked their lives at a critical time, in the Maori war.

Mr. ALLEN said the reports of these Committees continually raised in his mind this question: Of what value, after all, were the reports of Committees? Committees underwent considerable trouble in taking evidence and investigating cases, and Committees frequently recommended cases to the Government, or to the favourable consideration of the Government. In many instances he was afraid the work of Committees got scanty attention at the hands of the Government. Possibly, the Government were so taken up with other work that they could not give the attention to these reports that they ought to receive. He was afraid that would be the case in this instance. The Committee recommended that certain cases should be referred to the Government for their favourable consideration. He thought, however, that recommendation would receive but scant recognition. The time of the Government was so taken up that it seemed to him they should set up some tribunal to deal with the reports of Committees—that was, if Committees could not report in a direct way. He thought that, perhaps, in more cases Committees should report in a more direct way instead of referring cases to the Government. Most honourable members knew that the petitioners in the present instance were men who had served the nation, and rendered themselves, to a large extent, unfit to take up any other kind of work. Any one with any national feeling must admit that these men had considerable claims on the colony; but—and there was always a “but” in these questions—these claims had been largely considered by the House from time to time. Continually Committees had been set up to consider these claims, and continually honourable members had been told that the question had been finally dealt with. The House was tired of setting up Committees, and finally referred the whole question to the Crown Lands Commissioners, with the view of the question being finally settled. Here, however, the question was cropping up again. If certain claims had been excluded by the Crown Lands Commissioners on purely technical points, a Committee might be appointed to set such matters right. There surely should be some way of finally settling these claims. He did not agree with the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Fisher) in objecting to the Premier laying a return upon the table showing the cost which the country had incurred in settling these claims. It would be a good thing if the Minister laid such a return on the table, for it would let honourable members see how far the country had been generous towards these men: if such a return showed that they had been generous, it would be to their honour, and, if it

disclosed that they had been niggardly, then they ought to set matters right even at that late stage. These men were specially deserving of the consideration of Parliament, and he hoped they would receive fair consideration; and Parliament ought now at least to come to some final decision on this matter.

Mr. HOGG wished merely to mention the fact that in his district there were comparatively few old soldiers who were still dissatisfied, but a few of those were very seriously interested indeed in regard to this matter. Some claims had been submitted to the Commissioner of Crown Lands, which, on merely technical grounds, had been refused. A great complaint of the old soldiers was this: that they had not been so well treated as a number of the new soldiers,—in fact, that the men who had done good service in the past had had their claims ignored on the most frivolous grounds—on grounds which they themselves could not understand—while comparatively new men who had done little or nothing beyond wearing a uniform had had their claims admitted. But there was another grievance in regard to the certificates. The men found that, even if they were willing to go on the land, the certificate would not enable them to purchase land, and they also found that these certificates could not be used in the payment of rent. He thought this was a case of injustice. Some of these men were willing to go upon the land if they could get a sufficient quantity, but with a mere order for £30 it was impossible for them to purchase an adequate quantity of land for the purposes of a home. They found also that if they exchanged the certificates, and these were converted into debentures, they suffered a sacrifice of from one-fourth to one-fifth. Instead of being able to realise £30 for the debentures they were only able to get for them from £24 to £25. He thought that was a very great injustice. Some measures should be adopted, if they were to be allowed to take up land at all, whereby they might take it up under reasonable conditions. They were not able to take up land under the lease-in-perpetuity system, and by paying rent obtain a home for themselves. He hoped that attention would be devoted to the able suggestion thrown out by the honourable member for Te Aroha, that a Committee of the House should be set up to overhaul the Commissioners' decisions on the claims sent in. These decisions had not been uniform, and he believed that a great many claims had been ignored on insufficient grounds. He did not blame the Commissioners, but believed they had considered the applications according to the letter of the law instead of in a spirit of equity.

Mr. WILSON thought it would be a very good thing if a Committee were set up for this purpose: that the Government should consider the advisability of appointing an independent Commission. Hitherto these bodies had been entirely composed of Civil servants, who were somewhat tied in consequence; but, were a Commission set up composed of gentlemen

not in the Civil Service at all, they might probably be able to offer some practical suggestions for arriving at a definite conclusion to this matter. If they went thoroughly into the matter they might be able to determine what claims should receive recognition and what should not. He knew, himself, of a man at Palmerston North who had served both as a soldier and as a Volunteer, and in the Police Force as well; yet through some technicality his claim was shut out. If a Commission were set up during the recess, he suggested that it should be composed of persons completely independent of the Government service. It was too late in the session to refer the matter to a Committee of the House. He hoped the Government would do something next session in the way of setting up a special Committee to investigate these claims, and not relegate them to a Committee such as the Waste Lands, which had its time fully occupied with other matters. If a Committee of investigation were set up to deal with the question, why not set up the Committee that sat two years ago? They should do something to arrive at a final settlement, rather than have these claims year after year coming back upon them.

Mr. SHERA thought it was a credit to Parliament that so much had been done to discharge the claims of old soldiers, but it was almost to the disgrace of Parliament that it had only half settled the matter. If the Bill had been passed last session, amended as it was by the Committee set up for the purpose, he thought the whole question would have been settled. He hoped that another Committee would be set up to investigate the question, and to report accordingly, so that this matter might be settled fairly.

Mr. BUCKLAND said it was quite evident that this was a burning question. Every single man of the House who had an old soldier in his district felt bound to talk about him. He understood that the honourable member for Bruce said he had had one or two old soldiers in his district, but, as the honourable gentleman said, they unfortunately died, so that it seemed he had lost the last of his old soldiers. He heard that another honourable member sitting behind him had an old soldier in his district, and that he was going to talk about him. In fact, these old soldiers seemed to be like the widow's cruse of oil: they never seemed to fail. They were brought up from year to year. He would suggest that the Government should try to make an end of the matter by appointing a new time within which claims should be sent in, then absolutely making up their minds to resist all attempts to introduce other petitions. He could not understand where all these petitions came from. He alone had presented three or four, and he supposed that a hundred years hence some members would be presenting petitions from the old soldiers still. While he said this, he sympathized with them, and he agreed that the House ought to look into the action of the Commissioners in rejecting some of the claims, and ascertain why they had done so. He presented

a petition three days previously, and, with the sanction of Mr. Speaker, it was referred straight to the Waste Lands Committee. Knowing that that Committee was going to sit the next day, he thought it would be on the list, but he found that it was not so—that that petition must have been mislaid. It was from a Mr. Campbell, who, he thought, had a deserving claim which ought to be recognised, and he hoped that when it eventually reached the Waste Lands Committee they would send down a supplementary report.

Mr. FERGUS said that if the House expected for a single moment that by setting up another Committee they were going to end this matter they were very much mistaken. As the honourable gentleman who had just spoken said, these old soldiers' claims were like the widow's cruse, which never failed. In fact, like the poor, they were always with us. The Legislature tried to arrive at a finality some years ago, and when he was Minister of Defence he introduced a Bill dealing with the subject, which received the sanction of the House and became law. It set forth that old soldiers, military settlers, and Volunteers were to send in their claims up to the 31st of December, 1889; and the House year after year for two successive years extended the time up to which these persons might send in their claims, and the claims now being pushed before the House were principally those of men whose cases had been dealt with by the Commissioners of Crown Lands in various parts of the colony. He was not prepared to say that in some instances these claims might not be just, but he believed that the great bulk of the claims brought before the Commissioners and rejected were legitimately so rejected. At the same time he knew that there were cases, and very hard cases indeed, where men had been kept out who were justly entitled. In fact, he held in his hand at that moment a letter from an old soldier of the 65th Regiment, named Peter Rankin, who obtained scrip for his land, and he said in his letter that he knew perfectly well it required certain moneys to go on the land, but he did not exercise the scrip within the specified time, and now in his old age he found that the scrip, or its equivalent, was refused and his claim was upset: he had been told that he had not exercised it within the specified time, and he could obtain no redress whatever. Cases like this, and others which had been mentioned in the House, deserved the consideration of the House. He did not think it wise, however, to set up a special Committee to go all over the ground which had been so well gone over in the past, but he did think it would be well for the Government to empower some existing Committee of the House to investigate these claims, and let them try to have, if not finality,—that they could never have,—at any rate justice done to those claims to which it was essentially due. He might say that he agreed with some members of the House that a great many of the petitions put forth improper claims; but at the same time he did believe there was a num-

Mr. Wilson

ber of these people who had legitimate claims that had been refused.

Mr. MOORE had no desire to prolong the debate at any length. These claims were continually being brought before the House, and he thought that there ought to be some finality about them. He thought that, while they had afforded some time that afternoon to the ventilation of old soldiers' claims, yet at the same time they might be killing some young Bills on the Order Paper, and that, of course, would be very undesirable indeed. The House ought to get to the business before it. Although he agreed with a great many of the remarks of the honourable member for Te Aroha when he stated that proper time had been given the old soldiers and the Volunteers to put in their claims, yet there were some other claims that would have been put in but for a misunderstanding as to whether the Volunteers, in Canterbury at any rate, would have their claims allowed. He believed that instructions were sent to the Commissioner of Crown Lands at Christchurch—or so it was understood—that the claims of the Canterbury Volunteers would not be allowed, and, owing to the misunderstanding, many old Volunteers in Canterbury did not send in their claims, although they were justly entitled. He thought, under these circumstances, it was only right they should now have the opportunity of putting in their claims, more especially as they would have put in claims within the specified time if they had not been prevented from doing so owing to the misunderstanding that he had referred to. He knew that, at any rate, one or two of the old Canterbury Volunteers, after they left the Canterbury District, put in their claims, and had had their claims recognised, while others who resided in Canterbury neglected to put in their claims simply because they did not think they would be recognised. Under these circumstances some means ought to be adopted whereby these old Volunteers might put in their claims. He suggested that a special Committee should be set up by the House, composed of members who had no connection whatever with any other Committees of the House, so that they could give these claims their full consideration.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There are no members who are not upon some Committee or other.

Mr. MOORE said, at any rate it would require a Committee of members who had very little other work to do, because it would take a considerable amount of time, so that those old soldiers and Volunteers who had served their country so well might have their claims looked into and properly dealt with. He thought, at any rate, it was only fair that the House should understand the position of the Canterbury Volunteers who, owing to a misunderstanding, had failed to put in their claims, and were now shut out from doing so.

Mr. REEVES thought the honourable member for Waitomata deserved the thanks of the old soldiers, if not of the House, for bringing up this subject. He thought, too, that honourable gentleman showed uncommon generosity, for

it was to be remembered that the Chief Messenger at the Government Buildings himself was an old soldier. But, whilst they admitted that there were a great many genuine claims advanced, he thought the House should not lose sight of the extraordinary nature of certain of the applications which came before the Government. The honourable member for Wakatipu, with that deep voice which so often accompanied a shallow wit, had accused the Government of neglecting their duty in this matter. He would point out that the Government—and the House must not lose sight of the fact—had expended something like £30,000 in one way and another in satisfying these claims; they had done more than any other Government had even in a greater number of years. But they had to consider the kind of claims that were put forward. Only the other day one of his colleagues had received a letter from Sydney from a man who had been for twenty-five years out of the colony, but who was in it for one year twenty-six years ago, and considered that he should be compensated as an old soldier. As to the claims from Auckland, if they were to believe all those to be genuine they must come to the conclusion that the population of Auckland was entirely composed of old soldiers, Austrian gum-diggers, and skinflint politicians. But, as they knew, those claims were grossly exaggerated; and the fact that there was a great number of genuine claims in Auckland must not blind the House to the fact that a considerable number of cases had either been settled or were not genuine. He wished to point out to the House that the Government had already done more for the old soldiers than any other Government; and if the cost to the country of the time that had been taken up in discussing the matter had been capitalised and presented to the old soldiers he did not believe there would be now one single claim extant.

Mr. BRUCE said it was somewhat amusing to hear the views of honourable gentlemen representing Southern constituencies. They wanted finality in the case of old soldiers, and at the same time they wished the claims of the Volunteers to be still further considered. The remarks of the honourable member for Bruce, if they meant anything, meant that the Government ought to be guided by the reports of the Committees of the House. He would be very sorry to think that the Government were always to act on the recommendations of Committees, speaking as one who had had considerable experience on these Committees. He had a very vivid recollection of his honourable friend the member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor) appealing with power, and pathos, and eloquence to a Committee in connection with the claim of a petitioner with a wooden leg, and, in consequence of the honourable gentleman's popularity, he was afraid that some of the members of the Committee offended against their consciences on that occasion. Surely the Government were considered the guardians of the public purse and expenditure; and it would be undesirable that

on all occasions they should be guided by the reports of Committees. It appeared to him, after all the discussion on the question, that there was a very considerable amount of ignorance in the House in reference to these claims. He had heard it remarked that there was need of further legislation on the subject. The crux of the question had not, in his opinion, been touched that afternoon. As a matter of fact, they had legislation quite sufficient to deal with all the claims. All Imperial soldiers discharged in the colony, in consequence of an arrangement they had entered into with the authorities in the Mother-country, were entitled to land-grants in this colony, under an Act the colony had itself passed; and the Volunteers were entitled to grants of land if they had given five years' continual and efficient service antecedently to the repeal of the Act of 1876, and also those who took service antecedently to the passage of that measure. Those were the claims that required recognition, and that must be recognised by the House. Of course, a date had been stated—a period fixed after which no petitions would be considered. Now, the question was this: Should that House declare that a man who had a claim, but who was ignorant of the existence of the law, be debarred still from presenting his petition? No doubt they would have petitions in future from persons whose claims had been rejected, in the hope that another Parliament might receive them more favourably. But, in reference to these old soldiers who were unaware of the passage of the measure fixing a specific—he might say, an arbitrary—date, would they not be guilty of injustice to those men if, in consequence of that want of knowledge, they refused to receive their claims in the House? That was the crux of the question. As to the finality that had been spoken of, he could not understand how honourable members could speak of it in the manner they did. He hoped that, whenever a man had a claim which deserved recognition at the hands of the State, that House would be always a tribunal ready to recognise it.

Dr. NEWMAN said, at the risk of annoying the senior member for Dunedin City, and being accused of stonewalling the Ocean Beach Domain Bill, he would like to say a few words in connection with the old soldiers. He was amazed at the speech of the Minister of Education, who went out of his way to sneer at one of his own supporters for doing a generous action; and the rest of his speech was extremely like the Ministerial policy of braggadocio. He began by telling the House that he and his Government had spent £30,000 on these claims. That was just like the wonderful assertions they read in the Financial Statements and Public Works Statements, where all the errors were of one colour—in favour of his Government. If honourable members were to study the blue-book published by the Government—he believed he might sometimes take the figures to be right, although they were frequently wrong—they would find that just a trifle more than half the amount he swaggered of had been

spent. This was the kind of braggadocio that went down with the country.

Mr. SEDDON.—What about land-scrip?

Dr. NEWMAN said he was always alive to the fact that it never did for any one on that side of the House to make any statements, because they were always challenged unless he could corroborate them. In the Financial Statement they would find that £9,745 10s. was issued in debentures, and last year something near £7,000 in cash; and that, with a trifle more, was a long way under the £30,000 the honourable gentleman talked about. He thought the way in which this matter had been treated by the Government this session was most ungenerous. They had in the past allowed a certain number of people who had just claims to have those claims recognised; and he failed to see why, having recognised the claims of these, they should refuse to accept the claims of the few remaining. If honourable members would take the trouble to look over the list of old soldiers' claims—those who had real and valid claims—they would find them to be very few indeed; and it would be exceedingly easy for the Ministry, who boasted that they had done so much, to do the rest. He believed that something like three hundred *bona fide* cases would cover the whole list. And he thought what had happened was extremely unfair. If a man had the luck to apply at Kumara or Auckland, perhaps he got his claim recognised; but if he applied in another district—say, Wellington, or Christchurch—the Act was differently interpreted by the Commissioner. This was very unfair. There were such cases as he had mentioned in the House some time ago—that of an old naval man who fought at Rangiriri, and at the Gate Pa, and other places. He had had two or three discharges from ships marked "Good," "Very good," and "Fair"; and, because the last one was marked "Fair," the honourable gentlemen over there refused his claim, and that old sailor, who had a splendid claim, was still waiting. He thought, in cases of that sort, if they were referred to a Committee, the Committee would act not on purely legal and technical grounds, but on equitable grounds, and the balance of the claims would be cleared up. The cases were all in, and all registered, and a large number thrown out, and the whole matter could be finished this session. But the matter would come up next session, and, in fact, till the claims were all satisfied.

Mr. MACKINTOSH moved, That the debate be adjourned. This was the only day for local Bills, and the time was being wasted.

Mr. FISH thought the honourable gentleman was exceedingly ill-advised in attempting prematurely to stay the debate, which must be full of interest, not only to the House, but to the colony generally. He would like to know what subject could be of greater importance than the consideration of the claims of these old soldiers who had fought and bled in the service of the country. The honourable gentleman spoke of local Bills in comparison with the importance of a question like this, and asked

Mr. Bruce

that the debate be adjourned, when they were only just getting at the facts of the case. Local Bills were, of course, important, and, no doubt, would receive the attention of the House in due course; but the honourable gentleman had failed to show any cause why the debate should be adjourned. The honourable gentleman must know that if the debate were adjourned there would be no opportunity of reopening the subject this session. And, as much had been said that was worthy of criticism, he thought they should continue the debate. It was a pity that the rules of the House would not allow them to continue till half-past twelve. In fact, he thought it was a great mistake to attempt to burke the discussion on this subject. The honourable member for Wallace would serve his purpose better if he were to ask leave to withdraw his amendment, and let the debate be continued to its legitimate end. He was sure the Premier did not wish this question to be raised on another day, when important questions affecting the interest of the country might be before the House. He also felt sure that the Premier would agree with him that members who took a great and proper interest in this subject must necessarily take an opportunity of bringing forward the question again. He would appeal to the honourable member for Wallace to withdraw his amendment, and allow the debate to proceed.

Mr. TAYLOR trusted the honourable member would not withdraw the motion, but would take a vote upon it. He would ask the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) whether, if he had a Bill in which he was interested on the Order Paper, he would like to be treated as he was treating the honourable member for Wallace. Not a bit of it; he would go about snarling, and growling, and turning up his toes, and using strong language.

Mr. SPEAKER must ask the honourable gentleman to withdraw that expression.

Mr. TAYLOR would, of course, withdraw it, but he must say that the contentions of the honourable member for Dunedin City were, to his mind, quite worthless. He trusted they were not going to have this farce played every afternoon, for it was nothing but a farce. The honourable member for Dunedin City was only using these old soldiers' claims—he would not say for the purpose of preventing certain Bills from coming on, because that would be unparliamentary, but—for some purpose which the honourable gentleman himself best understood.

Mr. W. KELLY trusted that the honourable member for Wallace would withdraw his motion, and let the House finish the discussion on this important question.

Mr. PINKERTON thought it was very much to be regretted that the honourable member for Wallace had moved the adjournment of the debate, for it only gave an opportunity to certain honourable members to carry out the object they had in view. There was no doubt that by bringing up this discussion the consideration of local Bills would be put off till

half-past five o'clock, when they could not be considered. Already forty minutes had been wasted in the discussion of this question; and, whether it was to be continued now or not, other opportunities would be taken for bringing it up again.

Mr. HAMLIN was sorry the honourable gentleman who had just spoken had taken up the line of argument he had done. As a rule, honourable members had looked upon that honourable member as the father of the House in giving them fatherly advice, but this time the honourable gentleman had lectured them in a most extraordinary manner. There was no question that they could discuss which was of more interest to the country than that which was now before them; and, had not the honourable member for Wallace brought forward his motion for adjournment, the probability was that the matter would have been already settled. Surely, if there were grievances to be remedied, it was the duty of Parliament to discuss them, and to arrive at a conclusion with respect to them, and they should not have a surprise sprung on them in this way. He thought the honourable member for Wallace was only defeating his own object, for if he had allowed this matter to be threshed out it would have been finished by that time, and the House could have done justice to men who had fought and bled for their country. It was a matter for deep regret to him that the Government had not long ago dealt with these claims in a proper manner.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not discuss the merits of the question.

Mr. HAMLIN did not wish in any way to incur Mr. Speaker's displeasure; but he trusted the honourable member for Wallace would see his way to at once withdraw the motion for adjournment, and he ventured to say that if the honourable gentleman did so the House would in a very short time arrive at a decision. As members of Parliament, they had a right to express an opinion on the question without being accused of unjust motives. At any rate, if he were afforded an opportunity of speaking on the motion, he would do so as one who had seen what these men had gone through, and who knew that they should not have been treated in the way they had been treated.

Mr. SEDDON hoped honourable members would agree to go on with some business. He thought he could give two very good reasons why the House should agree to the adjournment of the debate. One was that no doubt the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) was very anxious that an opportunity should be given for the Ocean Beach Public Domain Act 1892 Amendment Bill being gone on with. That honourable gentleman should therefore vote for the adjournment of the debate. Again, it would probably suit honourable members to vote for the adjournment of the debate, in order to give the Government an opportunity of moving that for the remainder of the session Thursdays should be devoted to Government business. There had been very

little opportunity given this session for getting local Bills through; and, if every afternoon were to be wasted in this way, it would be necessary to amend the Standing Orders, and allow local Bills to be taken as other Bills were, and come on at half-past seven o'clock. There had not been a single day this session that some block had not been put in the way of local Bills. He trusted, therefore, that the House would agree to the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. PALMER said it was all very well for the Hon. the Premier to ask them to agree to the adjournment of the debate; but when the honourable gentleman got his colleague the Minister of Education to get up when other members had spoken, and attack them, and throw gratuitous insults upon them—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must withdraw that expression.

Mr. PALMER would, of course, do so, and substitute for the word "insults" the expression "Ministerial compliments." But he could not help feeling strongly when the Minister of Education got up after other honourable members had spoken, and threw out insinuations against them. They had been wasting time and delaying business, but whatever delay there had been that afternoon had been caused by the way in which the honourable gentleman had attacked the Auckland Province and members of the House; and the whole blame for what had passed must rest with the Government. He would certainly take an opportunity of refuting the "Ministerial compliments" hurled at him by the Minister of Education for doing his duty in advocating justice to the old soldiers; and, though he was debarred from doing so on the present motion to adjourn the debate, still he would do it on another opportunity.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said it was quite refreshing to him to hear the Premier come forward with so much, no doubt, genuine sympathy for those who had local Bills on the Order Paper; but he thought the honourable gentleman might at the same time extend a little of the sympathy to those private members who had public Bills on the Order Paper. Thursday after Thursday those public Bills had been blocked owing to the action taken by the Premier. He had himself a Bill of a most important character to prevent corrupt practices at elections, which had never been allowed to come on through the action of the Premier. He did not, of course, wish to unnecessarily take up the time of the House, and he was sure the honourable member for Dunedin City would not accuse him of stonewalling any man's Bill—a thing he never did in his life; but the present motion for adjournment was itself calculated to prolong discussion. On the present occasion he was free to confess the reasons for and against the adjournment were as nearly balanced as they could possibly be. Now, one reason why the debate should be adjourned, and a very strong reason too, had just been made apparent by the remarks of the honourable member for Waitemata.

Mr. PALMER.—Should not be adjourned.

Mr. Seddon

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said, Should be adjourned. He thought this debate should be adjourned, in order to give the honourable member for Waitemata time to cool down his just indignation at the extraordinary attack which was made upon him by the Minister of Education. That was a reason why the debate should be adjourned. The honourable member was one of the most consistent supporters of the Government in the House—for years had been a supporter of theirs without, he was going to say, a breach of continuity at all.

Mr. SEDDON.—Hear, hear.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said no one could be more faithful to the Ministry; and the Minister of Education took the first opportunity he could to make an attack upon that gentleman, of a character—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was travelling beyond the question of the adjournment of the debate.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said Mr. Speaker knew how he always bowed to his decision, and he assured him that he commenced by stating that the reason why the debate should be adjourned—he did not say it should, for there were reasons the other way—but one reason, and an important one, why it should be adjourned was that the honourable member for Waitemata had been worked up into such a condition, as Mr. Speaker could judge himself, by the unwarranted attack made on him by the Minister of Education, that—

Mr. SEDDON.—Friendly banter.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Friendly banter! How would the honourable gentleman like such banter himself? How did the honourable gentleman look when he got such banter from him (Mr. Mackenzie)?

Mr. FISH.—He looks pale.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—"He looks pale," said the honourable member for Dunedin City. He looked purple, rather. There was no such banter on the Opposition side of the House, amongst their friends; not at all. But the Government took every opportunity they could of denouncing, in view of the general election that was coming on,—

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was wandering from the subject.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said that he should return to it at once, and he did so by suggesting to the House to seriously consider whether the debate ought not to be adjourned, to allow his honourable friend to recover from his indignation, so justly based. Then, the Minister made the same attack upon the honourable member for Wakatipu, who, he had no doubt, also required a little time to recover—he was at the process now, he had no doubt. He thought an adjournment of just sufficient time should be made to enable him to achieve his purpose. The honourable member for Wallace would see that in making this motion for adjournment, which he honestly did to help a friend, he had done that friend a great deal of mischief, and he had burked a discussion which was of a very important

character, although, he admitted, it was a very old discussion. It was a discussion that he thought ought not to have been broken into in the way in which it was by his honourable friend. He had only got one old soldier, so far as he knew, in his district, and therefore he could not be accused of having self-interested views in prolonging the discussion; but he thought the honourable gentleman would have done well not to interfere in a discussion which was at least of vital importance to a large number of those who had died—well, fought and possibly bled for their country; and therefore that was a reason why the debate should not be adjourned. So that the matter was so evenly balanced that, as usual upon such occasions, he was unable to make up his mind as to which way he should vote, but he should be happy to listen to the arguments of others and decide when the proper time came.

Mr. REEVES thought the debate ought to be adjourned, in order that they might emerge from the entanglements of this extraordinary discussion. In addition to the old soldiers' claims, he thought they had, during the last twenty minutes, discussed almost everything that could come into the fertile imaginations of honourable gentlemen on the spur of the moment. He thought the debate ought to be adjourned, also, to give the honourable member for Waitemata and himself an opportunity of shaking hands.

Mr. PALMER said he was not anxious.

Mr. REEVES thought he ought to take this opportunity of assuring his honourable friend that he did not intend to irritate or insult him, and, if he did so unwittingly, he was very sorry for it, and hoped he would accept his assurance of that fact. And, as his conduct had been referred to, he would remind the honourable gentleman, as evidence that he was not at all anxious to attack him in this matter, that some week or two ago when the honourable gentleman was away, and was not able to defend himself, he (Mr. Reeves) stood up on that occasion, and, by what he said, induced the honourable member who moved the resolution to withdraw it; so the thing dropped. And let him say that, whilst there was such a thing as pouring oil on troubled waters, there was also such a thing as pouring oil on blazing coals and causing them to burn up more violently; and if there was such a thing as soothing smarting sores, there was also such a thing as rubbing salt very hard into them, and the honourable member for Mount Ida was a master at the art he alluded to.

Mr. SHERA hoped the House would not adjourn the debate, and he hoped the Government would vote with those who wished the debate continued. In connection with this debate, certain expressions had been used which honourable members wished to reply to, and he was sure the honourable member for Waitemata was not at all grateful to the Minister of Education for having got a former motion withdrawn.

Mr. O'CONOR said he might not have an opportunity of speaking again on the subject; and he desired to say this: that the House, by adjourning this debate and by treating the matter as it had been treated, was practically shutting the door in the face of persons who petitioned that House. This was a matter on which he thought every member intrusted with a petition must feel interested, and, in justice to petitioners for redress, honourable members were bound to resist the motion for adjournment. He felt that many of these claims could be easily settled.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman was going outside the question of adjournment.

Mr. O'CONOR said the adjournment of the debate would prevent the House concluding a thing that could have been completed in less time than it had taken to adjust side-issues. For that reason he thought members should not accept the motion for adjournment, but should insist on going to a vote, which would enable this matter to be dealt with in a reasonable way, and in a way creditable to Parliament.

The House divided.

AYES, 32.

Buick	Lawry	Sandford
Carroll	Mackintosh	Seddon
Dawson	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Smith, W. C.
Earnshaw	McLean	Tanner
Guinness	Meredith	Taylor
Harkness	Mills, C. H.	Valentine
Hutchison, G.	Mills, J.	Ward.
Hutchison, W.	Mitchelson	Tellers.
Joyce	Reeves	Hogg
Kelly, J.	Rolleston	Pinkerton.

NOES, 28.

Allen	Kapa	Swan
Blake	Kelly, W.	Thompson, R.
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Thompson, T.
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Willis
Carnecross	McGuire	Wilson
Fish	Moore	Wright.
Fisher	Parata	
Hall-Jones	Rhodes	Tellers.
Hamlin	Russell	O'Connor
Houston	Shera	Palmer.

Majority for, 4.

Debate adjourned.

Mr. FISH desired to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor) had charged him with desiring to prevent a certain Bill from coming on. Unless he took the present opportunity of explaining, the honourable gentleman's statement would appear in *Hansard* uncontradicted. He wished to point out that he did not initiate this debate, and did not even speak upon the question at length. He desired that the ordinary business should be proceeded with.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the debate be adjourned till next day.

Mr. HAMLIN moved, That the debate be made the first order for next day.

Mr. SEDDON hoped the House would not agree to the proposal of the honourable member.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why?

Mr. SEDDON said, because certain arrangements had been made for next day. He had promised to bring on the adjourned debate on the Ellesmere land-scrip next day, and, if the present question were given precedence, it would be a breach of faith with the House. The proposal of the honourable member was, under the circumstances, a most unusual one, and it was one he could not agree to, in view of what already been arranged. There was nothing in this matter which required that it should be given precedence over all other business.

Mr. HAMLIN.—The attack your colleague made.

Mr. SEDDON said the friendly banter of his colleague was no reason why the House should break faith in regard to what had been agreed upon. That was no reason why they should set all other business on one side. He hoped honourable members, on reflection, would see that the course suggested by the honourable member would be a very unwise course to take.

Mr. HAMLIN, as a matter of personal explanation, desired to say that it was not only the friendly banter of the Premier's colleague which deserved consideration, but it was the seriousness of the question itself which honourable members wished to decide. They could take the banter for what it was worth.

Mr. FISH trusted the honourable member would adhere to his amendment, and for this reason: The Premier was accountable for the adjournment of the debate. The honourable gentleman had thought fit to go outside the ordinary course of business—in his opinion, most unjustifiably—to stop a debate upon a question which a great number of members, including many of the honourable gentleman's own supporters, were desirous of threshing out. The honourable gentleman had managed to get the debate adjourned by a majority of only four votes. He thought the House should support the amendment, in order to teach the Premier a lesson not to interfere with the progress of business on private members' days. It would be a proper thing to show the honourable gentleman, by a vote of the House, that they did not wish him to do so in future. The Government ought to attend to their own business, and allow the business of private members to proceed uninterruptedly without interference on the part of the Government.

Mr. W. KELLY would suggest that the honourable gentleman should make the day Tuesday instead of next day.

Mr. SEDDON said there was no necessity to fix a day. He would give the House an opportunity of discussing this report, and he thought that assurance ought to be accepted.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said the old proverb applied that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush. They had this matter in hand now, and he would therefore support

the amendment that the debate be made the first order of the day for next day. There was nothing in the statement that there was another matter to be discussed. Both matters could be discussed. At any rate, the House could fix a time, and he hoped the next day would be the time fixed. It was necessary that some affirmative decision of the House should be come to with reference to this matter. He had presented a petition on the very first day of the session, and it only now came up, with some fifty others, to be shelved by being "referred to the Government for consideration." It was not tolerable that these matters should be left over till another session. He would be prepared to support a motion that a Commission be set up in the recess to deal with these claims, which had been sent in in time according to law, but which the petitioners considered had not been dealt with adequately or properly by the Commissioners of Crown Lands.

Mr. McGUIRE thought it would be better to accept the assurance given by the Premier. It would, perhaps, be all the better for, and more in the interests of, the old soldiers if some time were allowed before the matter was brought up for consideration. He trusted, therefore, the honourable member would withdraw the amendment.

Mr. CADMAN, as one who represented a large number of old soldiers, was inclined to indorse the advice of the last speaker that honourable members should accept the assurance of the Premier, and have some subsequent day for the consideration of this matter.

Mr. HAMLIN said this question had been in fact burked by a Minister of the Crown. He could not at the present time withdraw the amendment.

Mr. ALLEN understood that the only difficulty in the way was that the further consideration of the Ellesmere-scrip question had been fixed for next day. That difficulty might be got over by making that the second order of the day, and making the question now under discussion the first order.

Mr. SHERA intended to vote for the amendment, because he did not think it right to postpone the consideration of this question indefinitely. It was not the proper way to treat these old soldiers, and he hoped his new colleague from Auckland would vote with him on this question, and not allow Parliament to close its doors against the claims of the old soldiers.

Mr. O'CONOR thought it would probably satisfy both sides if the Premier fixed a day—a day a short time ahead—instead of next day. There was a feeling in the House, and he shared it, that some of these petitions which had been presented early in the session were now being practically shelved. He hoped his suggestion would be adopted.

Mr. SEDDON said he had stated that he would give the House another opportunity of considering this report, and, having given that assurance, he could not accept the amendment.

Mr. O'CONOR would ask the Premier to allow Tuesday to be named. In justice to a

large proportion of honourable members who voted with the Premier on the last division, and who were pledged to support these old soldiers' claims, he thought the honourable gentleman ought to deal with this question.

Mr. T. THOMPSON said, as one who represented a district in which a large number of persons lived who were deeply interested in this question, he would have liked to have something definite from the Premier. He could see, however, that the time was going to be wasted till half-past five o'clock, and he was very sorry to see it. As he had said, some of his constituents were deeply interested in this question, and he was content to accept the offer of the Minister that a further opportunity should be afforded for discussing the question.

The House divided.

AYES, 24.

Allen	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Blake	Mackenzie, T.	Shera
Bruce	Mills, J.	Swan
Buckland	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Carroll	Moore	Wilson.
Fraser	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Palmer	Fish
Kapa	Richardson	Hamlin.
Kelly, W.		

NOES, 37.

Buick	Kelly, J.	Seddon
Cadman	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Carnecross	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Earnshaw	McGuire	Tanner
Fisher	McLean	Taylor
Guinness	Meredith	Thompson, T.
Hall	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Hall-Jones	Parata	Willis
Harkness	Pinkerton	Wright.
Hogg	Reeves	
Houston	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Rolleston	Dawson
Joyce	Sandford	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Valentine.	McKenzie, J.

Majority against, 13.

Amendment negatived, and motion agreed to.

MR. EARNSHAW AND THE GOVERNMENT.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—There has been a great deal said, Sir, about the old soldiers' claims to-day. I desire now to bring to the notice of the House the question of the young soldiers' claims upon the honourable gentlemen who sit on the Ministerial benches; and, to be in order, I beg to move the adjournment of the House. Although I have been for nearly three years in the House, this is the first time that I have taken the opportunity of moving the adjournment of the House. It is therefore with considerable reluctance that I avail myself of this part of the procedure of the House to bring before it a matter personal to myself, because I believe, as far as possible, in expe-

ditating business, and, so far as I am concerned, I have always tried to do that. But circumstances which have happened within the last week or two have placed me in such a position in this House that I think it right, and due to my own honour, to my position in the House, and to my constituents, that I should state to honourable members what has occurred, because throughout my whole life I have never allowed myself to stand in a false position, nor will I do so now. Now, from the time I came into this House up to the present I claim that I have been a loyal and consistent supporter of the present Government. But, Sir, to my astonishment, last Friday noon the Government Whip, Mr. Charles Mills, came to me, and told me, in the A to L Committee-room, where a conference was to be held, that the Premier had seriously considered the expelling of myself from the Government Whips' room and from the Government party. I told the honourable gentleman then that that course was such a grave one that I should require his intimation of it to be in writing; and I think that every member of the House will admit that to be a proper request. I was greatly surprised at such a statement being made to me, considering the position I have always taken up in support of the present Government; and I say there has been no member of that party in this House, and more especially outside of the House, who has more supported them during the last two years—even on points upon which I thought they were wrong—than myself.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Yes, Sir, because I understand party government to be this: that you cannot have everything as you would like it, but if, in the main, your party carry out the policy with which you agree, you must to a large extent give way upon the minor details. That is the true principle of party government; and while I have been here I have undoubtedly supported the Government in all the main lines of their policy, and I have also defended them on minor points, even when I did not think they were right. As I say, I told the Whip of the party that the position in which I was placed was of so grave a character that I should require his communication in writing; and when I left him, and was going home, it occurred to me that, owing to the peculiar characteristics of the Premier, it was possible that some day I might find myself, like Mahomet's coffin, hung between his version and mine of what occurred on this occasion. Therefore I took the opportunity of writing to the Whip the following letter, which I propose to read to the House:—

"Friday, 18th August, 1893.

"DEAR SIR,—With regard to certain representations and communications that you in your capacity as Government Whip, conveyed from the Premier to myself this morning, to the effect that the Government seriously considered excluding myself from the Whips' room and the party, I desire to intimate to you that such a course is so grave in its character

that I request of you that any such intimation should be in writing, when I shall give it my most serious consideration and a frank and plain reply.—I have, &c.,

“WILLIAM EARNSHAW.

“Mr. C. H. Mills, M.H.R.,

“Government Whip.”

This was on Friday at noon; and at midnight the same day I received the following from the Whip: and I may say that I could not help seeing that the Premier had had my letter placed in his hand during the afternoon:—

“Wellington, 18th August, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,—In reply to your letter of this date, as the Government being dissatisfied with your action as one of their party, and consequently wishing you to define your position, I regret that both in speaking and voting this session you have not accorded that loyal support which the Government might reasonably have expected from the member who seconded the Address in Reply, and who was also one of those who attended the first caucus and expressed his general approbation of the Government policy.

“I must now leave it to you to justify the course you have taken, and which, to myself and the party, has been inexplicable.—Faithfully yours,

“C. H. MILLS,

“Government Whip.”

“William Earnshaw, M.H.R.”

Well, that letter was so slighting in its character, and so indefinite, that I adopted the Premier's suggestion, given, I think, a fortnight before under similar circumstances, which I shall speak of later on, when he told me, if I had any trouble, I should always apply to him direct. I did so by the following letter on the 21st August:—

“21st August, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,—Last Friday, at noon, Mr. C. H. Mills, Government Whip, informed me that you seriously considered excluding myself from the Whips' room and the Government party—in fact, that he had been twice advised so to act.

“I enclose copy of correspondence that has ensued, the originals of which I assume that you have.

“As I entirely fail to understand the motive and particular circumstance why this insult should be offered to myself, I desire, at your earliest convenience, a detailed statement wherein I have failed as a labour member, what pledges to my constituents I have broken, what principles of progressive Liberalism I have departed from, what departures from the policy of the Liberal party I have made that warrants you in this extreme course of action towards myself.—I have, &c.,

“WILLIAM EARNSHAW.

“Hon. R. J. Seddon, Premier.”

To this I received the following reply:—

“Premier's Office,

“Wellington, 23rd August, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 21st instant, enclosing copy of corre-

Mr. Earnshaw

spondence which has passed between yourself and Mr. C. H. Mills, M.H.R.

“I have no desire to enter into a controversy on this, to me, somewhat painful subject. Mr. Mills stated my views fairly well when, in his letter, he said you had not accorded the Government that loyal support which we might have reasonably expected.

“As to the question of details mentioned in your letter, you are not answerable to the Government, but to your constituents.—Yours faithfully,

“R. J. SEDDON.

“W. Earnshaw, Esq., M.H.R.,

“Wellington.”

I have read this correspondence because I want it to go now to my constituents, so that they will be able to judge of me when I go to meet them. Now with regard to seconding the Address in Reply: When I was coming up to Wellington, at the Christchurch Railway-station I received a telegram from the honourable gentleman requesting me to second the Address in Reply. I had but a moment before going down to catch the boat, and I went into the railway office and asked them kindly to wire to the honourable gentleman that I would do so. I think the wire was, “Many thanks; will do the best I can.” When I seconded that Address I understood that the policy of the Government was to be simply a continuation of the policy of the late Mr. Ballance. That, I think, will be fairly accepted by every member of the House. I heartily and thoroughly gave my support to the proposal that the honourable gentleman should meet this House as Premier this session, and, I think, when in Wellington I was the only one who openly and fairly said I thought he had won his spurs, and deserved to be Premier this session, whatever my personal views might be as to any other honourable gentleman that occupies a seat in this House. So that I think honourable members will say that I have given him fair-play. Now, with regard to the caucus, I do not know whether it is courteous to say anything about it, but I never said a word at that meeting. The honourable gentleman laid down his policy, and we made him Premier unanimously. I think the general line of policy that the honourable gentleman placed before the caucus was generally accepted; but I do not see that I was in any way bound to the chariot-wheel of the honourable gentleman. It is within the honourable gentleman's recollection that a number of those who were present said they could not adhere to all the lines of his policy; and yet they are still regarded by him as belonging to the party. With regard to his policy this session, there has been only one Government main policy measure this session, and that has been the Electoral Bill; and have I gone behind the Premier in that? I say that, as it was brought down by Mr. Ballance, I have supported it loyally. Last year I supported it, and it was only when the honourable gentleman departed from the lines of last year that I challenged the issue. So much for that. But let me go back to the commencement of the dissension. It was when I spoke

on the Financial Statement that the first issue arose. I chose—and later events have shown that I had sound grounds for so choosing—I chose to dissent from the line that the honourable gentleman took at that time. The comments I made at that time brought down on my head the censure of the Minister of Labour. I made a remark in that speech as to which the honourable gentleman the day afterwards sent to me and said he wished to have an interview with me. He asked me to go into the Colonial Secretary's room, which I did. He charged me with having made a statement to the effect that perhaps he was as much under the thumb of the liquor ring as any other honourable gentleman. He placed one construction on what I said, and I placed another. I said the statement he made was not correct; but I said that when my uncorrected *Hansard* proof came down, if it was found that I said anything to impugn his honour I would freely and unreservedly withdraw it. He was not content, and begged me to come into the House and withdraw it, as he felt personally hurt. I said, "I will go down at once and unreservedly withdraw the construction you say is to be placed upon it." And the honourable gentleman knows I came right down and went to my table and wrote it out, and as soon as the House went on with the Financial Statement I rose in my place and withdrew it. That is within the recollection of the House. Now, what occurred in the interval between his getting that pledge from me and my making the statement in the House? He did an action that I think is unprecedented in parliamentary etiquette. As soon as he got that pledge from me he said he was going to convene the labour members together, and place the question in their hands whether he should resign his portfolio or not. I said, "That is a question for your own concern"; but I thought it an unfair thing to me, when in honour I said I would do all I possibly could. Well, this conference took place. What occurred there of course I am not aware of, but the subject of that caucus was myself, and yet neither the labour members in this House nor the honourable gentleman had the courtesy or the honour to ask me to be there. I believe they passed a vote of confidence in the honourable gentleman. I trust that I shall never be in such a position as to have to go and beg of members to pass a vote of confidence in me. Whatever they might do I would face it, but I should never act in that way. And I think it was not "good form" of the honourable gentleman to do such a thing. Now, I do not care whatever might have been the result of that caucus, but I ask honourable gentlemen to look at it in this way: Had they passed a vote of censure on me on that occasion, I undoubtedly should have had to walk over to those Opposition benches: that would have been my definite place, and I say it was not a proper thing for them to place me in that position. I do not know whether the Government think that because I supported a private member's motion on a private member's day, at about eleven o'clock

at night, that we should continue the business, and not support the Premier, who, I think, was entirely wrong in moving the adjournment on a private members' day at that hour, when there were Bills of importance to come on. There was the Bill of the honourable member for Mount Ida, which I consider to be a question of paramount importance in this House, and which I dare say all parties were trying to burke. But I do not think I can be held to have broken faith with my party in supporting an honourable member's motion that the business should continue till half-past twelve, and I know of no circumstance with which I can charge my mind as to my having broken faith with the Liberal party. We have heard a great deal in this House from time to time about servile followers. I do not know whether there is any such man as a servile follower, but I unhesitatingly say that the conduct of the Premier and the Minister of Labour towards myself is an evident attempt on the part of the Government to compel a servile following. I do not know whether they think I am fit material to make a shocking example of; my opinion is, they have come against a snag. In my humble position in life, I have always stated my convictions, and whether I stand in the House or go out I shall always do the same thing. Now, I have said—and there are good grounds for it—with regard to this question that has been before us, and which another member has referred to, but which I will merely mention, and I am not going to speak about—I mean, a reform of the liquor traffic—that the Government have not taken up the position that as a Liberal Government they might be expected to take. I think that what I have stated before, that they were not favourable to that position, has been borne out, and this will be still further evident as the session goes on. It may be that the honourable gentleman is studying to organize a solid phalanx round him, and perhaps he thinks—it is fair to assume that he thinks—that I should not be of so much value to him as some other honourable gentlemen who will be fighting in the same political arena in Dunedin as myself. Be that as it may, I shall go down to Dunedin and fight my battle alone. I shall decline the honourable gentleman's support, and I shall stand on my feet as a man, and it will go hard that I do not come in at the top of the poll.

Mr. FISH.—Hear, hear.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—The honourable gentleman may laugh.

Mr. FISH.—I should think I would.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I shall meet the honourable gentleman at Philippi. In my speech on the Financial Statement I said that I could not leave my party—that reform must come from within. And I cannot leave the principles I hold simply because the honourable gentleman chooses to turn me out of the Government Whips' room, and I am not going to do so. I am very sorry to have to bring this case before the House, because I am not like the honourable gentleman. I want, whatever position I hold in this House, the House to under-

stand distinctly the political position I take up, and that is more than the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) can say for himself. The honourable gentleman need not interrupt me, because I think he must know by this time that I am quite able to meet him at any time. If he will only wait a short while he shall have a bellyful. Now, Sir, I want to tell the Government that, though they have chosen to slight me, I am not going to leave the Government party. They may exclude me from the Whips' room, but they cannot prevent me from supporting those measures which I believe to be for the public good. But I have done with them now. I want to say a word or two to the Labour party; and I do not include the Minister of Labour in that party. I mean those six members who are in this House as working-men, and who when they go out will go back to their workshops. I say that they were ill-advised with regard to the course of action they chose to take with regard to myself, and I warn them that, be they ever so strong, if they permit the Premier to attack one of their number, they may one by one receive the same treatment; and I only hope that, if they ever get into that unfortunate position, they will be able to take up the same position as I have taken in the matter.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—I beg to second the motion. I may say that the honourable member for the Peninsula has to-day placed the matter, so far as he and I are concerned, fairly before the House. I may, however, say that, previous to any correspondence, and previous to the financial debate, the honourable gentleman made one or two remarks of a somewhat jocular kind to the effect that he was not quite satisfied with us;—nothing beyond that. Then, to my astonishment, on the night of the financial debate I heard certain remarks from the honourable gentleman affecting not only one member of the Government, but others as well, which seemed to me clearly outside what he should have said in the House, especially as no communication had been made to me or to the Premier.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Will the honourable gentleman say what those remarks were?

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—One of the remarks was that in future he should look upon himself as an independent member. Alluding to the Government, he said the party must purge itself from within. In speaking to him afterwards I said to him that, if he had a grievance against the Government, what he should have done was to have written to the Premier first, and then, if he was not satisfied with the explanation he got, he could have addressed the House, as he did at that time. The honourable gentleman will recollect that.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I do not.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—Well, that is what took place. As to the statement that the Premier had attacked him as one of the labour members, I give that a most emphatic denial. I cannot help saying that if there was any attack at all it must have come from the honourable member for the Peninsula himself, and not

from the Government; for I am positive that nothing could be further from the wish of the Government and their party than to try in any way to exclude from that party a single labour member of this House. But I think that the honourable gentleman's remarks with regard to labour members is rather misplaced; and I disapprove of the term, for, to my mind, we all stand on the same level in this House. With regard to another remark he made, as to the Government wishing to have a servile following, I do not think that anything has been done to justify any such statement as that. Over and over again I have heard the honourable gentleman say, when sitting on the bench near here, that he would not be a servile follower of any party. Well, Sir, in conversation with the honourable gentleman, what I did say was this: that his actions were not consistent with loyalty to his party; and I say so again. Not only in the House, but in the Whips' room also, he used to say things that, to my mind, showed that he was not a member who was acting with fealty to his party, but one who was rather disclosing a feeling of veiled rebellion.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I rise to ask the honourable gentleman to say what those remarks were.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman cannot speak unless the honourable member in possession of the Chair gives way.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—I think that, under the circumstances, it has been shown that all the party, and not the Government alone, had a fair understanding one with another. I alluded to the fact that at the caucus meeting the honourable member for the Peninsula fairly pledged himself to support the Government policy, and also the Government as then constituted. Afterwards I said to him that it would be fairer if the honourable gentleman wrote to the Premier, and that he was wrong in not doing so. Then I received the letter, and sent the reply, which the honourable gentleman has read to the House; and I think that correspondence fairly explains the position up to that time. But now, Sir, I think I have some cause for complaint that the honourable gentleman has never mentioned a word to me since about bringing this matter before the House. It was only by mere chance that I came in just now from the Committee-room, or I should not have been here when he was speaking. I think, in fairness, the honourable gentleman ought not to have brought these charges before the House without giving warning to honourable members. However, I will not occupy the time of the House by saying more, beyond this: that there was no wish on the part of the Government, or of the party, to exclude the honourable member for the Peninsula—quite the reverse; and the tenor of any conversation I have had with the honourable gentleman has been in reference to what the honourable gentleman has said and implied in this House.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—What is the statement?

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—The statement is in regard to the reply to the letter you sent.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Sent by instructions.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—I did not interrupt the honourable gentleman when he was speaking, and I do not think he should interrupt me. I am quite satisfied, as far as the party are concerned, he has not the slightest cause for complaint; but we wish to band ourselves together, and we wish to pull together: and I say that, if any one of the party forgets his party ties and acts as the honourable member for the Peninsula has done, it is only consistent that he should go to the other side of the House. My own idea of party ties is this: that we should stand together, and that, unless there is some particular and very important reason for change, no one should leave those who are defending the fort.

Mr. REEVES.—I rise, not to reply to certain remarks of the honourable member for the Peninsula which might be considered as an attack or reflection on myself, but to explain my view with regard to certain matters outside the House to which the honourable gentleman alluded. The honourable gentleman has thought it right to give a description of a conversation which took place between him and myself. If I cannot go so far as to say that it was stipulated that that conversation should be strictly private and confidential, I can only say that I regarded it as private, and am surprised that he should have treated it otherwise. However, I admit that, so far as I recollect, there was no absolute stipulation that it should be confidential. The honourable member will remember the instance in the financial debate to which he alluded, and the remarks he then made. I spoke to him of the exceedingly grave charge he had made against my colleagues and myself, and he would not accept the very ample assurance I gave that it was entirely unfounded, and he went on making that charge in face of my repeated denial. It was a charge that involved dishonour on myself and my colleagues. Therefore next day I consulted a personal friend outside the House who was supposed to be a personal friend of the honourable gentleman as well as of myself, and he advised me to have a friendly chat with the honourable member for the Peninsula. My excuse is that up to that time the honourable member for the Peninsula and myself had been on exceedingly friendly terms, and during the two years and a half that I have known him there has not been the slightest shadow of difference between us, and the similarity of views between him and myself on many important questions is well known. The honourable gentleman states that at this private conversation I begged of him to withdraw a certain remark he made. That is not the case. I said I thought he ought to withdraw it. The honourable gentleman said that when he saw his uncorrected *Hansard* proof, if he had made that remark, he would withdraw it. I said I did not care what ten or twenty uncorrected *Hansard* proofs said, I recollected exactly what he said. He then said he would withdraw it, and he did that in a very handsome way, and, as he met me half-way, I acknow-

ledged the withdrawal. The House must not be led to the belief that, after I got the pledge from him that he would withdraw the charge, I went behind his back and, without giving him notice, called a meeting of the labour members. That is not the case. What happened is this: that after that particular conversation I pointed out to him that the only way in which the labour party, with which I was connected, could hope for success in obtaining certain legislation on which we set great value was, that there should be absolute unanimity in the party, and that the cordial support which the gentlemen composing that party had always given me should be continued. I pointed out the difficulty there was in forcing labour legislation through Parliament, and I pointed out, also, that I could not expect any success unless I had the most cordial support in the House from all the labour party. The honourable gentleman then gave me to understand that, in spite of that, he would insist on having a free hand.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—That is not correct.

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable gentleman said that, while he meant to support measures that he thought right, still, he was going to adopt a different attitude in the future.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I must beg the honourable gentleman to pardon me if I ask him to allow me to explain. I said that I would unhesitatingly withdraw the charge, and after the honourable gentleman got that from me he said he would convene a meeting of the labour party: and he convened that meeting, and called to it four members of the Upper House,—which was a most improper thing to do against a member of this House. Then I said, "You can take that course if you choose."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member will see that he is making a second speech, which he is not entitled to do.

Mr. REEVES.—Yes; it was at that meeting that the honourable gentleman agreed to withdraw the words he used. Then the conversation went off into a channel not intended, and he gave me to understand that he did not care. I think that was the expression he used, "I do not care. I shall, of course, assume a different attitude from what I have done before, and I shall speak my mind," and so forth. Then I said, "Very well,"—that I should call the labour members together and point out to them the necessity for our working absolutely unanimously together, and observing a friendly and cordial attitude towards one another, and that if I did not think I should have that support I looked for I should probably quit the Ministry. The honourable member for Heathcote and the honourable member for Christchurch City, my colleague (Mr. Sandford), were away at Taranaki at the time I asked the labour members to meet me. Then we had a hasty and impromptu little talk. The honourable member for Invercargill, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton), and the honourable member for Wairau were at the meeting.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—And where was the member for the Peninsula?

Mr. REEVES.—I do not know where he was, unless he was in the House. But there was no attack made upon the honourable gentleman at all. The honourable gentlemen whose names I have mentioned will bear me out in that. Nothing but the kindest things were said about him, and all I said about him was as to the necessity of an absolutely cordial union between myself and the labour phalanx in the House. I referred to the fact of the unbroken and generous and cordial support I had from these gentlemen in the House and out of it, and then I asked if I could depend on that in the future.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Where did I fail in the Liberal policy?

Mr. REEVES.—I submitted that to them, and said that if I could not depend on that in future I should consider my position, and consider whether it was worth while going on in the Government. And I appeal to the honourable member for Invercargill, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton), and the honourable member for Wairau as to whether what I have given is not a fair sketch of what passed at that meeting. As to the reflections made by the honourable member for the Peninsula on the Government, I am not here to bandy words with him. I only say, honourable gentlemen remember what passed on the financial debate, and they will be able to judge whether the first attack came from me, or from the Premier, or from the honourable member for the Peninsula, and whether one of the most extraordinary attacks ever made by a Government supporter did not emanate from him.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I must deprecate these re-primations between one member and another.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Why?

Mr. TAYLOR.—I was a member of the caucus when the honourable member for the Peninsula was present, and he pledged himself, as far as I am able to understand, to support the present Premier.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I rise to a point of personal explanation. I never said one word.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Why this change of front? I can tell you. We have had a disturbing element introduced into this country during this session in the person of the honourable member for Inangahua. Sir, the honourable member for Inangahua accounts for my friend turning tail on the Government. I am prepared to say this: We have no right to have an excommunicated man, a spy—

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I ask if the term "spy" is a correct one to apply to me.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Did the honourable gentleman use the word in relation to the honourable member for the Peninsula?

Mr. TAYLOR.—No; I will tell you what I said. It was this: It is very undesirable to have a spy behind the Government. If my honourable friend objects to the word I will withdraw it. Of all the speeches that have been made his is one of the most extraordi-

nary. I can account for it. This honourable gentleman, the member for Inangahua, has been stroked down the back; he has been patted by the newspapers as the coming man. He is going to "make it rough" for the Government, and is going, I suppose—not to be a dynamiter, because that is all exploded. Well, I am astonished, absolutely astonished, at the honourable member for the Peninsula, because he was sent here—

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Give way to the Premier.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I give way to no man. Of course, if you like to make a statement, and then make an abject apology, I shall not. Apologize! I never apologize. When I make a statement I stick to it, excepting from a parliamentary point of view, when I have to obey the rulings of the Chair. The honourable member for the Peninsula admits that the Minister of Labour cast him into a corner. What did the member for the Peninsula do? He absolutely almost went down on his knees, and said, "I withdraw all these insinuations against you and the Government, and therefore will start with a clean sheet." I do not think the Government had any right to deal with this gentleman in the manner they did, for I think they ought to have dropped him before. He has been intriguing for the last three weeks—

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Untrue; utterly untrue.

Mr. FISH.—That is unparliamentary.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Intriguing with the honourable member for Inangahua. I have a right, in discussing a question of this kind, to ask the honourable member for the Peninsula whether there has not been intriguing going on.

Mr. FISH.—The honourable member for the Peninsula has twice iterated that the statement made by the honourable member for Christchurch City was "Untrue; utterly untrue."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable member knows he must not make use of such language.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I absolutely withdraw the words; but to say that I have been intriguing with, or that I have uttered one word to the honourable member for Inangahua, is absolutely and utterly incorrect.

Sir R. STOUT.—Allow me also to explain that I have had no conversation whatever with the honourable member for the Peninsula.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like to ask the honourable member for Inangahua—when?

Sir R. STOUT.—No conversation about the position at all.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I cannot understand these interruptions. The honourable member for the Peninsula must be very touchy. Read his speech on the Financial Statement. Read the whole of his speeches.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—This is the Government reply.

Mr. TAYLOR.—"The Government reply"! If I might use the term, after what they did for the honourable gentleman at the last general election—

Mr. EARNSHAW.—What did they do for me?

Mr. TAYLOR.—The Liberal party gave the whole of their weight in your favour.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Untrue; incorrect.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like to ask my honourable friend whether the Conservatives put him in.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I followed my own course, and will do it again.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like these continual interruptions to cease. I have only two or three minutes to deal with an important question of this kind, and I should like to deal with it from a fair, impartial point of view. Of course, I am prepared to do this. The honourable member for Heathcote and other honourable members have a right to say a word or two on this question and I am not going to take up any further time.

Mr. TANNER.—Reference has been made in the discussion during the last half-hour to some caucus of labour members, and in the term "labour members"—used collectively—I assume that I am included, especially as a Tory print dignified me, nearly three years ago, with the title of "the first of the labour candidates"—previous to the general election. I wish to say that I have learnt of this caucus for the first time to-day, during the course of this discussion. I knew absolutely nothing of any such meeting. I wish to disclaim in a most unreserved and emphatic way any connection with such meeting, or with any proposed meeting for the purpose named by the honourable member for the Peninsula.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—You admit it occurred?

Mr. TANNER.—I knew nothing of its occurrence till this afternoon, and it is possible, and, I think, extremely probable, that the reason is that my honourable friend the member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford) and myself were absent from this city for some four or five days during the time the Financial Statement was being discussed, and certainly on that evening when the honourable member for the Peninsula delivered his speech; and, consequently, we knew nothing of it.

Mr. J. KELLY.—I exceedingly regret what has occurred to-day between the honourable gentleman and the Premier, and I should not have risen at all to speak on this occasion but to defend the Minister of Labour from the charge made against him by the honourable member for the Peninsula. That honourable gentleman, I am sorry to say, has gone out of his way on several occasions to attack the Government and to speak of the Minister of Labour in a manner I think altogether uncalled-for. Now, that honourable gentleman has stated that neither the Minister of Labour nor the labour members had the honesty, I think he said, to invite him to be present—

Mr. EARNSHAW.—"Courtesy."

Mr. J. KELLY.—at that caucus. I think that surely we are all possessed of quite as much honour as the honourable gentleman, with all due respect to him. Regarding this caucus, the honourable gentleman stated that it was called together for the express purpose of passing a vote of confidence in the Minister of Labour. Now, Sir, I emphatically deny that anything of the kind ever took place, or

was intended. The Minister simply desired to ascertain whether the labour members generally supported the statements or charges which had been made by the honourable member for the Peninsula against the Government, and against the Minister of Labour in particular. The serious charge made by the honourable member for the Peninsula, in his speech on the Financial Statement, was to the effect that the Government was under the thumb of the "liquor ring."

Mr. EARNSHAW.—No.

Mr. J. KELLY.—I think I heard that charge made.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—That the Minister of Labour was, perhaps, under the thumb of the liquor ring.

Mr. J. KELLY.—Several attacks had been made, as well as this particular one, and the Minister was perfectly justified in calling the labour members together to ascertain whether he had their confidence or not. And I remind the honourable member for the Peninsula—and I am sure he will admit that what I say is correct—that in speaking to him as to what took place at that conference I assured the honourable gentleman on my word of honour that, while I would not tell him what took place, not one single word had been said about himself to which he could take exception: and I am sure honourable members present will bear me out in that. And at the meeting I and the other labour members assured the Minister that we had no sympathy whatever with the attack made upon him; and he said if it had been otherwise he would have been in duty bound to consider his position in the Ministry. I regret this circumstance exceedingly. I have always been on the most friendly terms with the honourable member for the Peninsula, and I hope to continue so, notwithstanding what has occurred to-day. I have no doubt whatever that, as the session wears on, the feeling existing between him and the Government will wear away. The honourable gentleman knows that no one has been more anxious to reconcile the honourable gentleman and the Government than I have been myself. I have done what I could, and I am sorry to say that up to the present time it has borne no fruit. I very much regret this occurrence.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

ALIENS BILL.

Mr. O'CONOR, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he need offer no apology for introducing it. As this country had all along enunciated the principle of protection to the industries of the colony, and as on every possible occasion there had been evinced a desire to foster the interests of the industrial and working-classes, and protect them from injury outside or inside the colony, he thought that the measure he proposed, as going in the same direction, must recommend itself to the great majority of the House. It aimed at the exclusion from naturalisation of the Asiatic population in this country. They formed a

very threatening element in our midst. The two operative clauses of this Bill proposed to deal with them in a way which he thought perfectly warranted, just, and extremely necessary in the interests of the country. No one could deny the right to grant or refuse letters of naturalisation, which was operative in the previous Act. The clauses he referred to were clauses 2 and 4. Clause 2 said that the Governor should issue letters of naturalisation to no alien who was not a desirable colonist—who did not show by his habits of life, or by the habits of his race, that he was likely to become a good colonist; and surely nothing could be more unwise than for the people of this young country to have in their midst a class of people who would never make good colonists, and who were merely birds of passage, interfering with the working-classes, and taking from them the means of subsistence, and then departing, and going to their own country, when they had reaped a harvest which they had not sown. The colonies had over and over again asserted this principle even against British subjects. He would instance the agitation of Australia against the convict system, and even of this colony quite lately upon "General" Booth's colonising scheme. The 4th clause indicated that the Government should not allow any alien to carry on certain businesses, notably those of shopkeepers and manufacturers and hawkers. One need only look at the history of Australia and of the United States of America to see the necessity of this. Our race could not compete in industrial work with the Asiatics, living upon a lower plane, and working longer hours—making themselves perfect slaves to whatever occupation they worked at, and living upon a kind of sustenance that would not suit our people. If we were going to protect our people, by Customs tariffs, from the manufactures of other countries and of our brethren at Home, we surely ought to protect them against the manufactures of aliens, and against being supplanted by them in industrial pursuits. In America the intrusion had been so great, and the evils resulting therefrom had been so many, as to occasion a great deal of disturbance. We were much nearer Asia than America was. We ought to have before us the fear that in the future enormous hordes of Asiatics might at any moment overflow and take possession of these colonies. He thought, in loyalty to the Empire, and to the race to which we belonged, we ought to take the greatest possible care to prevent the thin end of the wedge from being introduced by that population; for these small numbers were likely, in time, to be followed by the intrusion of steadily-increasing numbers, and might result in the exclusion of our descendants. They arrived in small numbers at first, as they did in Australia, and by their system of combination, of helping one another in competition with our people, and by their system of lowering the prices to a rate that people of European race could not produce at, they had worked the Americans out of many of the most promising industries in their country.

Mr. O'Connor

Those who had dealt with the Chinese had not gained by doing so; neither did they gain in this country, because once the Chinese had secured a monopoly they put the prices up as high as possible. Very lately he saw that disturbances had taken place. The following telegram appeared in yesterday's papers:—

"San Francisco, 20th August.

"The unemployed at San Joaquin, California, turned eight hundred Chinamen out of the vineyards. Several of the Chinamen were killed, and, when the Sheriffs attempted to stop the fight, the mob turned on and defeated them."

It might be said that we were in no such immediate danger here. Certainly not; but the time was, in America, when the Chinamen who came to that country were very few in numbers; but they soon found it a country that was better than their own, and they flocked to it in great numbers. In Australia it was the same a few years ago; and now what was the case? Nearly every handicraft in Melbourne was infested by the Chinese labour. Whenever they entered upon any handicraft they invariably drove our race out. If it was desirable that that race should supplant ours in this colony, the best thing we could do was to let things go on as they were. What had they done in Australia? He noticed in the papers during the past few days that "a number of the Melbourne Trades Hall men found three hundred Chinese working in the furniture factories on Sunday. The Chows work fourteen hours on the 'day of rest,' and the white cabinetmaker has a 'day of rest' every day." That was the position. They were not tied down to any hours of work or days of rest, and the consequence was, they could work very much more cheaply, than white people could. If honourable members who had the labour interests at heart allowed this to go on without protest—if the Government themselves did not assist in putting a stop to this evil, they would be responsible for what was surely taking place. He had watched the operations of the Chinese upon the goldfields. Honourable members from Auckland had referred to the intrusion of the Austrians; but the Austrians were of the same race as ourselves. He might point out that the Chinese had worked out nearly all the goldfields, which would now have been a great resource for the unemployed. What had been the result? That many of our people were unemployed. There were in the colony 4,444 Chinese, and there were only eighteen females among them. Those who had studied the subject acknowledged that nothing could be worse for morality than a great inequality in number between the sexes; and our Chinese population greatly helped to increase the existing inequality. The Chinese in no way became good settlers; and what was the process by which they had obtained possession of the industry of market-gardening throughout nearly the whole of the colony? When a Chinaman started market-gardening men were engaged by him from the head man, and worked at ridiculously low

wages—simply nominal wages; they lived on the meanest possible diet, and they worked from daylight to dark. He had known them work in Chinese gardens, when there was opposition between the Chinese and Europeans, for eighteen or twenty hours a day, in a half-naked condition. How could it be expected that European labour could compete with that? There were in this colony 906 market-gardeners, and among those there were only eighteen females. Any one could see what the effect of that was upon the vegetable markets. There was no open market; no settler could dispose of garden produce. The Chinese had got almost a complete monopoly of the market-gardening in the cities, through their shops and hawkers. And what use did they make of that monopoly? Did they supply the people cheaply? Anything but that. The articles supplied in the way of vegetables were all forced, unwholesome, and wasteful; and the prices they charged when they got a monopoly were most exorbitant. He had a list of the prices in Wellington, and any one could see the profit that would be left to any small farmer who could supply the market at such prices. For the "forced" vegetables they produced they received—For small bunches of beet, carrots, turnips, or parsnips, containing about four of each kind to the bunch, 4d. each; onions, 1½d. per pound; small cabbages and cauliflowers, 4d. each; celery, per plant, 3d. to 4d. each; artichokes, 2d. per pound. Let any man consider what would be the value of an acre of such produce to any of our small settlers if they had access to a market at half these prices. No wonder we had such a constant stream of Chinese leaving the colony with what to them was a fortune, taking their money off to China, and sending back others of their countrymen to take their places. They charged enormous prices, and supplied the people with very inferior vegetables. There was another system by which they worked here. They kept shops in all directions; our youths frequented those shops, and soon there would be no other at which to obtain fruit, both local and tropical. What could our youth learn there? They could learn Asiatic morality, tempered with opium-smoking. In the Chinese shops they harboured people of their own race, and at those places they practised the vices for which they were notorious. A boy or a girl going to such places was very likely to be enticed into some of their vices. The number of Chinese in the colony far exceeded the number of the unemployed. We had never had four thousand unemployed in the colony. And here was an industry—market-gardening—which might employ old and young, and our people were entirely excluded from it for the benefit of the Chinese. He hoped this Bill would be carried and put into force. There would be no hardship involved. There was nothing in it we were not entitled to do. "The Aliens Act, 1880," distinctly laid down that the Governor, at his discretion, might or might not refuse letters of naturalisation; and it was

generally acknowledged that we had a perfect right to say who should be allowed to carry on business in the country. We made such restrictions in regard to our own people. A Bill now before Parliament prevented certain persons from keeping hotels. We had laws restraining the women and youth from certain employments. We might enforce restrictions in other ways; and, if we desired to protect our own race, why should we allow these people to come in and create great monopolies, to the injury of the country, which were detrimental to the moral and industrial habits of the people? He thought the cry, "New Zealand for the New-Zealanders" might well be raised on this subject. It was the most important question that could engage members' attention, and he would point out again that although the Chinese in this country had taken up only two industries—gold-mining and market-gardening—as soon as they had exhausted the resources of those industries they would turn their attention to others. They found, now, different industries throughout the country which the Chinese were entering upon. He knew places where they were engaged in cabinet-making already, and he knew places where they were engaged in the dairying industry. What did that mean? It meant that they intended to find other outlets for their labour, and that they would come here in swarms, unless stopped. He hoped he had said enough to induce honourable members to support the Bill. At the same time, he hoped the Government would see their way to take it into their charge. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) laughed. He believed that the working-classes were not those which that honourable gentleman wished to protect. Let him go back to his constituents in Dunedin and tell the sorely-harassed store-keepers there, and the struggling poor, and the poor widow who was trying to make an honest living for herself and family by keeping a fruit-shop, that he preferred that the Chinamen should get the trade, and the employment, to the exclusion of our race, who were thus impoverished and driven to charitable aid. Let him say that; for that was exactly the position, and what his cynical laugh meant. The honourable gentleman seemed to have no sympathy with his own race. As he (Mr. O'Connor) had said, he hoped the Government would see their way to take up this Bill. He recognised that a private member had very slight opportunity of carrying a measure of this kind through the House at the present stage of the session. At the same time, he was firmly convinced it was a measure of the utmost importance, and, if it was not carried that day, the day was not far distant when there would be a combination in this country to compel the Government to carry something far more stringent.

Mr. McLEAN thought the honourable member for the Buller had brought forward a very important measure—one which the House ought certainly to consider very seriously in all its aspects. He had listened with very great pleasure to the remarks of the honour-

able gentleman, and he would like to add something to what he had said with regard to the monopoly which the Chinese had in Melbourne. He would like to bring under the notice of the House a newspaper extract on this matter, and he proposed to have it recorded in *Hansard*, in order that the country might know what was going on in other parts of the Australasian Colonies in this direction. The honourable member for the Buller stated that the Chinese had monopolized several trades in New Zealand; and in Melbourne they had obtained the complete control of the furniture trade and of the washing-and-ironing trade. During his (Mr. McLean's) stay in Melbourne he attended a meeting held there on the 22nd April. It was called together by a number of leading clergymen in Melbourne. Amongst the clergymen who attended it were the Rev. Mr. Edgar, the Rev. Mr. Scott, and, in fact, nearly all the most prominent divines in that city; and, according to the report which was published at length in the *Melbourne Age* of the 22nd April, it was proved at that meeting that over eight hundred and forty persons engaged in the furniture trade were walking about the streets of Melbourne without anything to do, and that the Chinese had so monopolized this trade that a number of firms—he would not mention the names there, because it was purposely avoided at the meeting he referred to, as it might do damage, these firms being influential persons in Bourke and Collins Streets—had contracted with the Chinese to supply them with the whole of the furniture and upholstery they required. It was stated at the same meeting that, in consequence of the Chinese supplying these articles, disease had been carried into some very influential houses in Melbourne; and if that had taken place in Melbourne the same thing might take place here. He himself visited some of the Chinese establishments in Melbourne, where they were engaged by the dozen—in fact, he might say by the hundred—in places not very much larger than that chamber, doing all sorts of ordinary work, such as ironing, washing and mangling, and many other things beside. There were people who said they did not monopolize any of the trade of Wellington. But facts proved the contrary. They now monopolized the whole of the fruit trade. Let honourable gentlemen who occupied seats in that House, and who were supposed to represent British-born New Zealanders, and others of kindred races who came into this colony, go through the streets of Wellington on a Saturday night and they would see that no one in this city could compete with the Chinese now in the fruit trade; and for this reason: It had been stated, and he believed it could be proved, that fruit which came from the islands in a green state was put under their beds by the Chinese at night in order to sweat it into ripeness. He asked the Government to appoint a Commission, if they liked, and they would see that the statement was true. The fruit was put under their beds at night, some dozens of men

sleeping together in their rooms, and by means of sweating this fruit they were able to retail it to the public. Perhaps honourable gentlemen themselves might eat the next day, in Bellamy's, some of the fruit treated in that way, and not be aware of it. In addition to that, the Chinese were now beginning to run dens for gambling. Several gentlemen in Wellington had made visits to these places from time to time; and he could state, from his own observation of one place in particular, that it was so; and, if the Government would look into it, they would see that, in the main facts, his statements were true. What did they do? They rented places in Courtenay Place, in Taranaki Street, and in Tory Street, from landlords to whom they paid 15s. a week, and to these places the Chinese resorted in numbers at night, and especially on Sundays. On Sunday he had seen dozens come out. They were gambling there all day and all night; and yet there was a law in existence which prevented gambling, and if Englishmen, Irishmen, or Scotchmen were caught at this gambling they were hauled up before the Court; but the police could not catch the Chinese, because they were too smart; in fact, he believed the police in Wellington were not numerous enough to attend to the whole wants of the city. He did not know whether the provisions of this Bill would be sufficient to meet the difficulty, but it had often occurred to him that the proper persons to get at were the landlords who leased the premises to these Chinamen. He did not know how the international law stood. Perhaps the Government would let them know. He thought they ought to take up the Bill of the honourable member, and see that it was passed through the House. He believed there was no measure which could more suitably find a place on the statute-book than this Bill. He was afraid, however, that the provision mentioned in section 4—that was, prohibiting the Chinese from trading as hawkers or shopkeepers—could not be passed into law without the assistance of the Government. But he could say this: that the monopoly which the Chinese in Wellington had already secured over the fruit trade would be extended to other trades, and honourable members would find, shortly, that they would take up furniture-making, the grocery trade, washing and mangling, and numbers of others. In a city like Melbourne, where there had been splendid machinery introduced by capitalists, machinery of the very best description, these Chinese were able to compete with the machinery, for the simple reason that they were able to live on a shilling or even on sixpence a day. They had no family ties, nothing to provide for; they never went to church, or to any place of amusement; and, in fact, they lived, as it were, on "the smell of an oil-rag." The question had a very serious aspect. If they allowed this colony to be overrun by any alien race it must of necessity degrade the present inhabitants; it must bring them down. He remembered that when the first Chinamen went up the Grey Valley

Mr. McLean

Road he called a public meeting, in the small district where he resided at the time, to discuss this question; but of course the people said, "Oh! let the Chinamen come; they will be good colonists; they will buy rice and other things." But from that day to this it had been felt in that district that the greatest drawback to it was the Chinamen. He did not think the evil was so bad in country districts as in the cities. They went into the back-gullies and got a little gold, and were not very much in the way. But in the cities they proved to be a very serious drawback, and he hoped the Government, therefore, would take the Bill into their consideration, and, if they approved of it, that they would take it up. He was not going to detain the House long, because there were other Bills to come forward, and he did not wish it to be stated that he was stonewalling. He was prepared to hand over to the Premier the paper he had intended to quote from, and the honourable gentleman would see in the report of the meeting held in Melbourne the facts that he had referred to with regard to the effects of Chinese competition in Melbourne.

Mr. BRUCE said the honourable member for the Buller, in introducing this measure, made the statement that he need not apologize for doing so because we had adopted a policy of Protection in this colony, and this was but an extension of it. He quite agreed with the honourable gentleman and his references to that fact. When he (Mr. Bruce) first glanced over the measure his impression was, that it was of a very narrow and illiberal character; but on second thoughts, which were generally the best, he came to the conclusion that it opened up a question which was very well worth the attention of the House and of the people of the colony. The honourable member, first of all, spoke of the protection which he wished to have afforded to the market-gardening industry in this colony; and the state of things in Victoria was also alluded to by the honourable member. It was a very significant fact, in connection with that—he wished to call the attention of honourable members to it—that in that day's paper they would see a telegram in reference to a deputation interviewing the Premier of Victoria with the object of inducing him to reduce the duties on woollen goods from 60 to 20 per cent. In reality, the state of things in Victoria was an object-lesson for the Protectionists of the House, and for those who, a few years previously, forced Protection down the throats of the minority. Reverting to the Bill, he wished to say that this was a blow, no doubt, aimed at the Chinese, — although the honourable member, in introducing it, spoke of other Asiatics, — because there were no other people coming to the colony who, either from their number or from their habits of life, would necessitate or justify such a measure as this. He congratulated his honourable friend on calling the attention of the House and of the colony to a very serious question, and one which would occupy the minds of the best men in Australasia. There was no doubt in his own

mind, at any rate, that the Chinese had been, from some points of view—his honourable friend did not consider it to be so—a useful class in the community. By their great industry and thrift—and in these respects we might very well take a lesson from them,—and by their special skill and knowledge in gardening operations, they had been able to supply all classes in our centres of population—and he alluded more particularly to our poorer classes—with cheap vegetable food. And if this measure were to become law it would have the effect, in the first place, in many instances, of ruining a proportion of those people who had embarked in the occupation of raising and selling vegetables, sanctioned by law and the customs of the colony; and, also, it would go without saying that it would have a deterrent effect on others wishing to go into that trade. The honourable member for the Buller alluded to America, and called attention to what was happening there. Many years ago, when a young man, he was one of the first to call public attention to this question; and to-day he said there was perhaps a conflict of races—socially and politically—facing the inhabitants of Australasia. The honourable gentleman's argument broke down absolutely from an economic standpoint; but there were larger questions involved. The honourable gentleman told them of the riots in America; and also that the Chinaman had been able to obtain—and he (Mr. Bruce) would ask, Why?—a monopoly of the sale of vegetables and fruit in this country: he alluded more particularly to vegetables. The honourable gentleman said they had driven people out of the trade; but he (Mr. Bruce) would ask him just to come down to a practical illustration: Suppose that the Chinaman came and found the European selling cabbages at 1d.; the Chinaman went into the trade, and undersold at ½d.

Mr. O'CONNOR said, he afterwards raised it to 4d.

Mr. BRUCE said, if the European in the first place could sell at 1d., the thing must be self-adjusting, because if the Chinaman raised the price the European could compete with him again. There the honourable gentleman's argument fell to the ground from that point of view. Again, he would ask him to get out of his head the idea that the beings they called Chinamen were Chinamen at all: Would he then object to their working at a lower price than those around them? Would they not be supplying articles of consumption for less than Europeans could supply them for? Even there his argument broke down. But there were other views than those the honourable gentleman alluded to, and these constituted the most important aspect of the question. The question was, Were they prepared, by what he might call domestic legislation, to prevent the influx of people who would be a very undesirable addition to our population? That was, in reality, the question they had to consider. These people came in very large numbers, and they were a people morally very inferior to the Anglo-Saxon race. And, more

than that, he had special knowledge in reference to the question, and he knew that they were drawn from the very lowest ranks of the Chinese people—they were not fair specimens of the Chinese. They were a race decidedly morally inferior, and they came in great numbers— young men in the prime of life; and the result was, wherever they congregated in any numbers they polluted the atmosphere all round. Particularly was that the case in the Chinese quarter of San Francisco. He was as strongly opposed to the influx of Chinese as any man, but it was a question, first of all, as the honourable member for Wellington City said, that was so large a one that the Government ought to take it up. He himself, at the present time, for various reasons, would not be in favour of the passage of this Bill. Granting, for argument's sake, that we had to allow these people in the colony, he thought it was wrong to shut up those avenues of employment in which they, at any rate, showed themselves to some degree useful. But there was another aspect of the question, and it was this: From our geographical position, to which his honourable friend had alluded, this was a very much more serious question to Australasia than to America, from our relative geographical position: probably in the future we should have close relations both commercially and, probably, politically. Now, this was the question: Should we, by any domestic legislation, go in the direction of wounding the susceptibilities of a people who were emigrants from a country which was a great and important Power? This legislation and treatment in Australia and America had, perhaps, had the effect of sowing dragons' teeth. China was now becoming a great Power—a Power whose voice might soon be heard speaking with authority in the councils of the nations. In the China seas at the present time the Chinese fleet was more powerful than the British, and there was every reason to believe that, probably not in the near future, but at no distant date, there would be a great influx of Chinamen into the Australasian Colonies. They would do very unwisely if, by any domestic legislation, they did anything calculated to wound the susceptibilities of that Power. He believed they should endeavour in some way to prevent an influx of Chinese; but, at the same time, it would require to be done diplomatically between the Mother-country and China. He hoped his honourable friend would not understand him to have spoken in any hostile manner to his measure; only he thought it was one of such importance that it ought to be taken up by the Government of the day, perhaps in another way. Of course, he was speaking far beyond the scope of the Bill, but that had been invited by the honourable gentleman's own remarks. For this reason—because he thought it was a very large question, and that this was not the method of dealing with it—he felt inclined to vote against the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HOGG said the last speaker had made a somewhat eloquent speech in defence of the

Chinamen, and with some of his remarks he entirely agreed. But he entirely disagreed with him in the opinion that they must wait for British legislation before they could deal with the question. He would remind the honourable gentleman that on more than one occasion the colonies had had to defend themselves against the Mother-country. It was not so very many years ago that the colonies had to protect themselves against the influx of criminals from Great Britain; and he thought the people of these colonies, having taken up an attitude of that kind then, were legitimately entitled to take steps to protect themselves now against an alien race. He must say, from his own experience of the Chinese, they possessed some very high recommendations. But it was the duty of the Legislature to view this matter from more than one aspect. The question was undoubtedly one of the most serious and important questions that could well be considered by a colonial Parliament. It might be that the Bill the honourable gentleman had introduced was intended to be the beginning of an anti-Chinese crusade. But, whether or not, there was no doubt about it that, even outside of Wellington, all over New Zealand, the various townships originally peopled by Europeans had been suffering more or less from the competition of Chinese labour. From a long colonial experience, he was able to say one thing: that he had found the Chinese extremely industrious and very enterprising, and in many cases they had been of immense benefit to the communities with whom they had mingled. He referred now to the Chinese gardeners. No doubt they had taught the Europeans a very useful lesson. He freely admitted they had been the means of supplying Europeans with a very healthy article of diet—with cheap vegetables—which would probably not have been furnished by less industrious or not so enterprising European gardeners. But, on the other hand, had it not been for the Chinese gardeners underselling the European gardeners, the latter might have succeeded in this branch of industry, which might have been a very different one at the present time. He had not the slightest doubt there was a good deal to be said on both sides. But he thought, apart from the question of growing vegetables, they had to look at the fact, which was a serious one, that they were beginning to turn their attention to various trades and occupations: they were occupying some of the best shops. They were carrying on business, not merely as fruit-sellers and sellers of vegetables, not merely as hawkers, but as storekeepers; and they would gradually enter into competition with every other form of trade, unless some restrictions were put in the way. That was the case not merely in Wellington, but up country. It was the case in the principal towns that he represented. He might state that there was a general feeling among tradesmen that the Chinese were rendering it impossible for Europeans to carry on business. This was a serious evil. It was all very well to hold cosmopolitan views—to

Mr. Bruce

be extremely charitable and take a wide view of these things, and deprecate anything in the way of race persecution; but in the struggle for existence it was absolutely necessary to protect one's-self. Notwithstanding all that was said by so-called philanthropists, he maintained it was the duty of every race to protect itself. It was their duty to consider whether, by admitting the Chinese, they were doing something calculated to be for their own benefit as a nation—not merely as a community but as a nation; whether they were admitting into their midst an element that was likely to benefit the people, or whether the introduction of this race was going to have a deteriorating effect. They had to look on this matter from a thoroughly practical point of view. If any honourable member was a station-owner, and was engaged in the raising of stock, would he introduce an inferior class of animal to deteriorate his stock? He would never think of such a thing. And, having made the country for themselves—enterprising pioneers having led the way of civilisation—they had a perfect right to turn round and say, notwithstanding all treaties between England and other parts of the world, they were not going to introduce a class of men who would injure or interfere with them. Let them look at what was going on in various parts of the world. They had heard a great deal about the persecution of races. They knew something of what the Chinese evil was in various parts of America, Canada, and California. They knew very well the magnitude of the evil there, and the stringency of the laws that had to be passed to prevent it from becoming too gigantic. Then, within the last few days they had had reports of riots in France with a view to prevent the influx of cheap labour from Italy. The French workers had risen up in arms against the introduction of aliens—who ought to be friendly aliens, being almost the same race as themselves. He did not say that it was a legitimate thing that they should do so, but it showed that, if cheap labour were allowed to be introduced, and certain races were permitted to come in, the result would be disturbance. He could assure honourable members that if they allowed this evil to get a strong footing the consequences would be serious. There were some portions of this Bill of which he did not approve, and the House must be exceedingly cautious in any legislation it passed. Having allowed Chinese to come here, he did not think it would be wise to resort to extreme measures against them. There were Chinese who had come to the colony, and who were occupying shops and carrying on business, and who had behaved themselves well; and, to his mind, they had acquired vested interests which could not be fairly disturbed. He thought legislation might very well be directed to preventing the evil in the future, because he admitted that it was an evil. Any person dispassionately looking at the matter must agree that it might become a great nuisance. From one point of view he did think the Chinese

were not a desirable race. He was not referring to their physical inferiority, but every one knew that they did not come to establish themselves permanently or to spend their money here. They came, like locusts, to get all they could and then go back to China. In that way a great injury might be done to the colony unless there were some means of checking their advent. Another thing to be looked at was, that the Chinese did not bring their wives and families with them, and they had no family responsibilities. As a rule, they did not marry in the country, and the result was that, as single men, they could compete against the married men of the colony. From the first he had been adverse to their introduction, for he had seen their doings on the diggings. Directly the Chinese ransacked alluvial deposits it was impossible for any European to follow them. For these and other reasons he thought that an influx of Chinese amongst a European population was calculated to do a large amount of harm. He would support the second reading of the Bill, but in Committee he would endeavour to have some alterations made in it.

Mr. MACKINTOSH said the question of allowing the Chinese to increase in numbers was a question which had been settled unanimously by Australia and this colony: it had been decided that it was not desirable to allow the Chinese to increase in numbers. For a considerable time he had held the same view, for several reasons, and chiefly that these people did not come to remain here. They came only to stay for a limited time, and to get all they could to take away to China. They did not bring their wives and children, and would not settle in the country; and even if they did it would not be desirable to have them as colonists in large numbers. At the same time, this Bill did not deal with that question, but it dealt with the Chinese who were already amongst us, and who were carrying on business here. For that reason, he regretted he could not support the Bill. He could not see that it would be at all fair or just to say that no aliens should be allowed to enter into business in this colony. Then, again, this Bill did not affect Chinese only, but all aliens. Clause 2 said that no letters of naturalisation should be issued to any aliens whose habits were such as would render them undesirable colonists—unless it was found by the Governor in Council that such persons might be desirable. Again, in clause 4, it was provided that no person except a British subject should be allowed to become the owner of any shop; and so on. If the House was prepared to pass such a clause as that he would be surprised. The fact was, as the honourable member for Wellington City had pointed out, that in most of the large towns the Chinese had got possession of a large number of shops, and were doing a profitable business. It might be desirable to inquire how it was that they were driving such a trade, and were out-running our own race.

Mr. McLEAN.—They have no taxes to pay.

Mr. MACKINTOSH said it was something more than that. At any rate, he would not be prepared to support the measure without further consideration. It would not only exclude Chinese, but also Italians, Germans, and members of other European nations. As regarded the main question of keeping the Chinese from coming into the colony in large numbers, he thought a provision to effect that was desirable. As the honourable member for Rangitikei had pointed out, the Chinese were a powerful nation, and it might be that some day they would be powerful foes to us; so that the fewer we had here the better. For that reason he considered that it was desirable that the Chinese should be kept out of the colony; but he could not vote for dealing harshly with those who were already amongst us, as was proposed here. The fact was that Chinamen were very industrious, very economical, and very shrewd, and they were very good business-men, and so they cut out people who were extravagant. It was the industry and sobriety of the Chinese that made them thrive. That we should pass such a law as this was monstrous: in fact, he doubted whether our relations with other European nations would allow us to pass a law like this.

Mr. PALMER said that if the honourable member for Wallace voted in accordance with the way he had spoken he would vote for the second reading of this Bill because he saw some good in it, and in Committee he could strike out all those portions that he objected to—namely, the portions which referred to people already in the colony. He thought the honourable member for the Buller deserved great credit for having introduced this Bill. He considered that one of the principal objections to Chinese was that they did not come here to become colonists, but to make as much money as they could out of the people of the colony and then clear out and leave us to sink or swim as best we could. He said any person, whether he were a Chinaman or from any other country, should be welcome to New Zealand if he came here to bear our duties and our burdens and share in our profits and losses. So long as those who entered the country became colonists of New Zealand he would be willing to admit them here, even to the extent of a certain number of Chinese; but if people of any race simply came to make money out of the people here and then went away—if they did not bring their wives and families with them and show that it was their intention to stay in the country—he thought it would be a detriment to the colony to allow them to come. He did not agree with the honourable member for the Buller in one thing that he said. The honourable gentleman said that the Chinese were worse than the Austrians. They might be worse than the Austrians who came to settle—and far be it from him to say that he would stop industrious Austrians from settling here—but he did not want that class who came here merely to make what they could, to clean out our gumfields, to impoverish the land, and then clear out, leaving us to sink or swim. When they had starved

out those New-Zealanders who were endeavouring to eke out a small existence on these fields, then they would go away. He should be very sorry to see that. He had Austrians in his electorate who had made some of the best colonists in New Zealand. They were to be found in the Puhoi settlements. He would welcome all who came to till the soil, and who would remain here, and be a credit to themselves and to the colony. And the Chinaman was sometimes a very fair colonist, too. He came and tilled the soil: but the Austrian simply came to take our wealth out of the ground, and to impoverish the land by taking the gum out of the land, and making it worthless. Such a man would be a curse to the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What is the use of the gum in the ground?

Mr. PALMER said they had not so much that foreigners should come and take it. The Government had not to provide a ha'porth of relief-works for the Auckland Provincial District. When a man had nothing else to do there, he went out on the gumfields and eked out an existence. What was the good of a sovereign until it was put in use? If a colonist had ten sovereigns he would not think it a good thing for a foreigner to come to the country and take five of those sovereigns away. They should keep what they had got for their own people, so that people should not be thrown on the colony, leaving the Government to provide relief-works in that district, where they had no such works now. Why should the County Councils have their roads cut up by these people without their paying one cent for the use they made of the roads?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Put on a poll-tax.

Mr. PALMER said they had no power to put on a poll-tax. If there was any way of getting these people to naturalise themselves he would say, let them do it. He congratulated the honourable member for the Buller on bringing in this Bill. It might not pass, but he would vote for the second reading. He did not believe in injuring any one at present in the colony, but he should like to see restrictions placed on those people who were pointed out by the honourable member for the Buller.

Mr. EARNSHAW said that, whatever might be the merits of the Bill brought in by the honourable member for the Buller, that honourable gentleman had not touched the main question at all, but had indulged in a lot of platitudes with regard to it. The Bill simply comprised three parts, and upon it these questions arose, namely: What constituted a desirable colonist? Should the Government be given power to decide what races should come under section 2? And, third, what restrictions should be placed upon undesirable immigrants? There could be no question that in the near future the whole of the Australasian Colonies, as well as the whole Anglo-Saxon race, would have to face this question with the Asiatic nations. So far as the standard of life was concerned, the Asiatic had the advantage of the European, and therefore there was no question at all that it

was the duty of the Government seriously to consider this subject of competition between the races. The Government of the United States, more particularly with regard to the Western States, had found the necessity of dealing with the Chinese-immigrant question. He could speak from personal knowledge of this subject, for he had given very close study to the Chinese question in San Francisco. He had spent months in studying the condition of the Chinese race in Kearney Street, and from what he knew of the question it was altogether impossible for a European to compete with them. The honourable member for the Buller had not realised the true position. He said in the 4th clause of the Bill,—

“No person but a British subject shall be the owner or occupier of any shop or place for the sale of wares or food, or for the manufacture of goods; nor shall any one but a British subject be or act as a hawker; and no license shall issue to any person to act as a hawker unless such person is a British subject.”

He said nothing with regard to the manufacture of goods, but simply that none but a British subject should be the owner or occupier of a shop or place for the sale of wares or food, and that he should not follow the occupation of a hawker. Assuming that they allowed aliens to come into the colony, and did not allow them to occupy shops, what were they going to do for a living? If they were allowed to come into the colony they must live, and they must displace other labour to enable them to do so. It might be the same as with those Chinese who, in building the railroads of central California, displaced the navvies, and, in that way were just as injurious as if they displaced the shopkeepers in Market Street, San Francisco. The question as to the nationality of the persons introduced offered no solution of the question. They must first determine whether they should allow these people to come or not. Unless they altered the Constitution they could not say to them how they should earn their bread. There could be no question about it this Bill was aimed specially against two races—the Syrians and the Chinese—and by the honourable member for Waitemata more especially against the Austrians on the gumfields. If they were going to debar Austrians from coming into this colony, on the same ground they would have to debar foreigners from any part of Europe; they would debar Italians, Frenchmen, Germans. They were all pretty well on the same plane, so far as competition with our labour was concerned. It was nonsense to talk about digging gum out of the earth. He would like to know where they were going to get it from if not from there. They were just as much entitled to dig for gum as for gold. Unless the Legislature was prepared to say distinctly and emphatically that we would only have a certain proportion of persons of Asiatic or other races in the colony, they could not deal with this question. Once they allowed a man to land on their shores they had no right whatever to restrict that man from entering on any

avenue of labour in which he could manage to earn his daily bread. He would simply say this Bill was beating the air with regard to this question. The honourable gentleman did not understand the question, or he never would have framed the Bill on the lines he had done; and whilst he (Mr. Earnshaw) thought this was a serious question, and one that would have to be grappled with, he would not support this Bill, because he did not think it dealt with the question in a proper manner.

Mr. BUCKLAND was not able to congratulate the honourable member for the Buller on the Bill he had brought in. The honourable member for Waitemata congratulated him; and he could easily understand the reason why that honourable gentleman had done so. That honourable gentleman has rather put his foot in it with regard to those Austrians and Germans at Puhoi. Before, he wished to do them all the harm he could, and he thought it would be a popular thing immediately before the elections to denounce all foreigners, especially Austrians. Now he found it a very profitable thing to praise them up, and he took advantage of this Bill to put in a good word for them. He had seen the error of his ways. He now made a speech to be embalmed in *Hansard*, to undo what he did the other night. Why should not these men have as much right to dig gum as others? Why should those who had been here a few years longer want to keep it for themselves? He could not understand that at all. The honourable member for the Buller, in bringing in this Bill, had probably the same sort of thing in view. Probably he had got a lot of market-gardeners, too lazy to work, and small shopkeepers, who charged such high prices that they could not live alongside the Chinese. This Bill, brought in on the eve of a general election, was very much like other things that were seen at this particular time. On account of the very gigantic intellect of the honourable member for the Buller, no doubt, they should scan the Bill, and look at it. The honourable member for Masterton said that these people could get naturalised. They could not. This Bill specially forbade their getting naturalised. The 2nd clause of the Bill stated—

“No letters of naturalisation shall be issued to persons belonging to any race whose habits and mode of life are such as to prevent them from becoming desirable colonists, unless it is proved to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council that any such persons are likely to become suitable colonists.”

Who was to say they would not be permanent colonists?

Mr. O'CONOR.—The Bill says “desirable colonists.”

Mr. BUCKLAND said the honourable gentleman did not care whether they were permanent or not. He was giving him credit for more than he deserved. “Desirable colonists.” They might possibly have people of all foreign nations coming here, and they might debar the whole world by this clause. And mark the skilful way in which it was done.

The honourable member for the Buller wanted to protect his tinpot twopenny-halfpenny villages on the West Coast. He was willing to turn these men loose on the rest of the colony as long as he could preserve his little tinpot places somewhere on the West Coast. He was very artful in the way he framed the clause. No letters of naturalisation were to be issued unless it was proved to the satisfaction of the Governor in Council that such persons were likely to become suitable colonists. He put the onus on the persons to be affected by this clause, who had to prove they were desirable colonists. How on earth could such a person prove it if he was already prejudged by incurable bias?

Mr. O'CONNOR.—The Governor in Council is to be satisfied.

Mr. BUCKLAND said the Governor in Council might have incurable bias. The Governor in Council meant the Minister, and how was a man to prove that he was a desirable colonist? The whole race was condemned. According to this Bill they could not possibly have a good Austrian. The Puhoi men had got to go under this Bill. He did not say that a German, a Frenchman, or an Austrian might be a very good chap. He did not say that a man might come into the colony. The Governor in Council must declare that the whole race was not to assimilate with ourselves.

Mr. O'CONNOR.—You are misrepresenting. Read clause 2.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he had read clause 2; and then clause 3 said, "The Governor may, by Proclamation, declare the races that come under the foregoing section." The word "may" was there, but that word was mandatory. If the honourable gentleman could command the Governor, he would do so, no doubt; but he thought that House would not allow him. The honourable member would have put in "shall" if he could. He said the Governor in Council should declare whole nations that should not be assimilated to our nation here in any way whatever. That was a very unfair way to put it. It did not stop their coming, but, when they came, he marked out certain things they should not do. He simply said, Come here as much as you like,—and Chinamen especially, who would have to pay £10. No Chinaman could come unless he paid £10 for the pleasure of coming here, and when they got him he was not to keep a shop, practically not to keep a garden, or do any hawking. That was a nice proposal! What right had they to allow persons to come into the country, and keep them here, and say they should not work in this occupation or that occupation? What right had we to take away a portion of a man's livelihood? Why not say at once that no grey-headed man should keep a shop, or that no bald-headed man should come to Parliament? They might just as well do that as say that we would allow a person to come to this colony and then say that he should not be allowed to do this or that work. The whole thing was preposterous. Chinamen had at present to pay a fee of £1 for naturalisation.

Mr. Buckland

The present Bill would stop them from being naturalised. The consequence of the passing of this Bill would be that all the Chinamen would have to give up their present occupations. He might point out that at the shops of the Chinese they could obtain certain peculiar little articles that could not be got elsewhere. They certainly taught us how to garden in places which before no European could garden in. They frequently went on to wet, marshy flats, and worked that land in a way that Europeans had certainly not been able to do. He had had no experience in buying vegetables from Chinamen, but in Auckland he had constantly seen them carrying round their vegetables; and he would say this: that they had taught us how to get a great deal out of a very small area of ground. If we said we would not allow any more Chinese to come here he might be prepared to support such a measure: that would be a manly and a fair measure; but the present Bill practically said they might come here, and then it proposed to gradually starve them out. That was an unmanly and unfair thing to do. He would also be in favour of preventing Syrians from coming here, but he did not think we should prevent a Syrian who was here from hawking—the only occupation he had been brought up to—for the result of that would probably be to drive him to take to unlawful methods of earning a living. He would support a measure to prevent members of certain nations from coming here altogether, but he would never do that in regard to Europeans. As to Norwegians, Danes, Austrians, and members of other European nations, we could not get finer or better men to come here than many of these people were. They were quite up to our standard in many ways. Then, if Home Rule were carried, we might possibly be legislating against Irishmen. The honourable member for the Buller might become Premier some day, and possibly he might proclaim all the European and American peoples as being races coming under this Bill, and then what a nice state of things it would be! It would not reflect any credit on us as a colony, nor would it do us any good. Then, the honourable gentleman had selected the occupations in which these people he was legislating against were now mainly working at, and it was evident he intended to slowly starve them out of the place. If we stopped a further influx of Syrians and Chinamen he did not think the present number in the colony would be dangerous. They would very soon assimilate themselves with the people here, or leave the colony, and they would be practically no detriment to us. He certainly hoped, if there was the slightest sign of any larger influx of Chinese, that whoever was Premier would take stringent steps to prevent it. He thought the time had come when our struggle and the struggle of the Australians would be against the Chinese. China had such a vast population, and was making such wonderful strides towards becoming a great military and naval power, that he thought they would be a menace to these colonies in the future. He would

almost like to see some Bill introduced to stop them from coming here, but not a Bill of this sort.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Amend it in Committee.

Mr. BUCKLAND said there was only one way of amending it, and that was by striking the whole thing out. He would certainly vote against it.

Mr. PALMER desired to make a personal explanation. The honourable member for Manukau had put into *Hansard* that he (Mr. Palmer) had denounced all Austrians.

Mr. BUCKLAND said he did not say that.

Mr. PALMER said he had never denounced the Austrians, but had stated that they were honest, sober, and industrious.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I never said the honourable gentleman denounced them.

Mr. SEDDON said the Bill now before the House opened up a large and most important question, involving as it did the question of international law; and Imperial interests were also involved. He should say that it would be contrary to the law of nations were a Bill of this kind allowed to pass. There was no doubt we had power as a colony to prevent the landing of undesirable colonists—those of an alien race; and, if it was found they were coming in too great numbers, and to the detriment of the people of New Zealand, it was in that direction that relief must be given; and he, for one, would not hesitate for a moment to ask Parliament to pass such a law as would prevent what in the past had been to New Zealand a very great evil. He said this with all due respect to those who claimed for the Chinese race that it was owing to the industry, care, and economy of the Chinese that they were able to compete successfully with men of European race. He denied that altogether. He had known the Chinese on the goldfields, and he would say that on the goldfields they were undesirable. They had overrun our alluvial goldfields, and had thus reduced the European population on our goldfields. There was alluvial ground that could have been worked for years by our European miners, but the Chinese had gone on those goldfields in hordes, and worked out the ground in a few years, and had left the country all the poorer. They had thus done a serious injury to the European miners. And, while the Chinese were winning gold, they were practically of no benefit whatever to the country. Very light duty was collected from the goods they consumed, and they traded within themselves exclusively; and whilst, as he said, they were impoverishing the country we were practically getting nothing in return. And he would say this: Should we not apply this rule to this question—should we not endeavour, as far as possible, to preserve and improve our race here? We ought to look to that; and when a nation that did not look to that, and look to the future as to what the race was to be, those who governed that nation were not doing their duty to the people. In New Zealand, with our climate, with our present population, and with other advantages we had, we must in years to

come, if we preserved intact the race we had here now—we must and should be the first people in the southern seas: in fact, he questioned whether he might not go further afield. He therefore said, Where you found an undesirable class of colonists coming in large numbers you should prevent them. Some years ago he introduced into the House a Bill placing restrictions upon the landing of Chinese. In another place they refused to pass the same, and thus to give effect to the wishes of the representatives of the people.

COUNT-OUT.

Attention having been called to the State of the House,

Mr. SPEAKER counted the House, and found there were not twenty members present; and the bell having been rung, and there still not being a House,

Mr. SPEAKER declared the House adjourned.

The House adjourned at nine o'clock p.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 25th August, 1893.

Second Readings—Third Readings—Mangatu No. 1 Empowering Bill—Major Kemp—Native Trusts and Claims Definition and Registration Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READINGS.

Companies Bill, Gisborne High School Bill, Kiwitea County Bill, Mokoreta Cemetery Reserve Bill, Wellington (City) Suburbs Sanitation Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Customs and Excise Duties Bill, Lyttelton Orphanage Lands Vesting Bill, Taranaki Relief Fund Distribution Bill.

MANGATU NO. 1 EMPOWERING BILL.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said he had been asked to take charge of it by the honourable member representing the Southern Maori District in another place, who had charge of it in the Lower House. The Bill had received very careful consideration not only from the Private Bills Committee of the Lower House, but also from a Select Committee specially appointed. It had been considerably altered, and, he thought, improved. The object of the Bill was set out in the title: it was for the purpose of incorporating the Native owners of a block of land in the Gisborne district, containing one hundred thousand acres. The position was, that some years ago the title to this block was investigated by the Native Land Court; and 170 persons, whose names were given in the schedule of the Bill, were found to be entitled to a share in the block. Those

owners nominated twelve persons to act as trustees for them. That arrangement was accepted by the Court, and formed their title to the land. These twelve persons shortly afterwards executed a declaration of trust setting out that they held this land in trust for all persons by whom they were nominated. Five of the twelve trustees had since died, and, in the regular course, successors had been appointed by the Native Land Court. In place of the twelve trustees originally appointed, it appeared that there were some fifty persons who now claimed direct action in dealing with this land. Of the 179 outside claimants, many had died, and the remainder had applied to the Native Land Court for succession orders in the usual course. The Court found that it was prevented, by the application of the nine hundred and ninety-nine Acts relating to Native lands now on the statute-book, from dealing with the succession of these outside persons, on the ground that they could recognise no one as having a right in the block except the twelve persons named in the grant. This had given rise to very great dissatisfaction; and the land, which was valuable, and in a rising district, was rendered completely useless; neither could the trustees dispose of any of it in any possible way. The present proposition was quite a new departure in dealing with these questions, and it was proposed with a view to the land being thrown open for settlement. It was a proposal for incorporating all the persons interested in the land, and declared that they had the rights of owners, and gave them the power of appointing a committee, by election of the whole, to manage the particular block, giving them power to dispose of it under certain restrictions set out in the Bill. It was provided that the proceeds of the sales or leases should be paid to the Public Trustee, and by him be distributed among the persons found entitled to it. It was an experiment that would be watched with considerable interest, and it was also one that in this particular case might be tried without fear of unpleasant consequences. The Bill was one which should be read a second time, and should then be referred to the Private Bills Committee, where any evidence in opposition could be heard.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said he had been asked to call the attention of the Council to one apparent omission in clause 4. It would be better to mention it now, as he should not have an opportunity of bringing it under the notice of the Committee. The wording of the clause left it open to the meeting to appoint persons on the committee who were not owners, and it appeared that that was regarded in many quarters as an omission that ought to be remedied. He therefore desired to draw his honourable friend's attention to the point.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA wished to say a few words about the Bill. He had only just seen it, and he thought it was a very important measure. It dealt with a large block of land. He also noticed that there were a large number of Natives whose names appeared as owners of that block. He hoped the Council would be

cautious in dealing with the Bill. He knew that there was another company dealing with land in the same district some time since, and the Native owners who joined that company had suffered, and the lands had been squandered by the company. He thought he recognised in this list of names the names of some persons who were connected with that company, and he had no doubt they would be able to persuade the majority of the owners to allow their lands to be parted with by that company. They were taking that step in order to be able to deal with the lands. An Act was passed by Parliament by which only ten names could be inserted in the Crown grant or certificates for the land belonging to the people who had made the applications. It was in 1873 that the law was passed by which the whole of the owners could have their names inserted in the title. The law was so altered because the Natives suffered by having their lands vested in trustees. His opinion was that the proper thing to do was to subdivide the land, so that each owner could deal with his land as he thought fit. He knew very well that these trustees induced the Natives to sign each document, and the result would be that they would have petitions constantly coming to the Council. If he could be sure that the Natives did each one of them agree to this measure of his own accord, and that the signatures to the agreement were not obtained by certain persons going round and asking them to sign these papers, then he should feel more satisfied. He knew that some of those persons whom it was proposed to appoint as trustees were also connected with the company he had already referred to, and that they were also joint owners in the block in question. When he had a Bill before the Council the Hon. Dr. Pollen said they should be very careful and see that they were doing the right thing. He (Mr. Taiaroa) was of that opinion now. As regarded the present Bill, he feared that possibly some harm might result from the passing of it. He had lived for fifty years in this world, and had not yet been accused of having obtained possession of any land from the Natives fraudulently. When the Taiaroa Empowering Bill was being discussed the Hon. Dr. Pollen urged the Council to be very careful and cautious, to remember that Taiaroa was a chief who had considerable influence over his people, and that he would probably obtain possession of their lands. He (Mr. Taiaroa) could assure the Council that he had never done anything of the kind, but when the honourable gentleman moved the adjournment, postponing his (Mr. Taiaroa's) Bill, he felt sure that the honourable gentleman had that opinion regarding him, although nothing had been brought forward against him. He believed the honourable gentleman himself was connected with the company to which he had referred, and that had done so much harm. He thought the honourable gentleman ought to remember the failure of that company, and not endeavour to apply a similar measure to the Natives. He (Mr. Taiaroa) had not, personally, done harm to any

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Native. A measure of the kind should, properly, be brought in by a member like himself. He noticed the Bill was a private Bill, and he hoped it would go to the Private Bills Committee or to some other Committee—say, to the Native Affairs Committee—where some of the owners could be called. The question was, whether the Bill was desired or not. He would only be too glad if the Native owners could come and prove that what he had said had been uncalled-for, and that they would assure him that it was their own desire that the Bill should pass. He moved, *That the Bill be referred to the Native Affairs Committee.*

The Hon. the SPEAKER said it must first go to the Committee of Selection.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN considered this was one of that class of Bills which required extraordinary investigation. It should first go to the Committee of Selection, and then to the Native Affairs Committee for investigation. He did not like the look of the Bill, although he did not know anything about the locality. He would like to know in what position these hundred thousand acres of land would be, and in whose occupation they were. Was he to understand that a lot of the land was already sold?

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—No.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said his idea of dealing with the land was the same as that expressed by the Hon. Mr. Taiaroa—namely, that it should be cut up and divided among the Natives, and made inalienable, so that they might work their own land, and be under the ordinary law. He would not offer any objection to the Bill going to the Committee.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE understood his honourable friend Dr. Pollen to have given the strongest possible guarantee that there was nothing objectionable in the Bill; otherwise he might have some distrust of it. His honourable friend thoroughly knew that part of the country, and the rights and wrongs of the case; and, if it were sent to any reasonable Committee to verify the schedule, he saw no objection to the Bill passing.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN said he was, personally, quite indifferent about the Bill. He had been induced by the honourable member for the Southern Maori District in another place to take charge of the Bill in the Council. He had not any very strong confidence in the capacity of Natives to conduct their own affairs before these committees, but he was quite willing that the experiment should be made in this case, so as to give them an opportunity. He thought that to the Natives themselves should be left the responsibility of choosing their own representatives on that committee, and if they thought it desirable that a higher intelligence, or a more practical acquaintance with such matters, than their own should be brought to bear on it they should not be prevented from taking it. He understood his honourable friend Mr. Taiaroa to have referred to the New Zealand Native Land Settlements Company, and he did not seem to speak in the highest terms of that

company. What that company had done was this: They entered into that business with a very sincere desire to help the Natives on the East Coast to get the titles to their lands settled, so that they might be disposed of and made available for settlement. The result was, the company lost. All those persons—amongst whom he was one—had lost many thousands of pounds, and that was after all their years of arduous and thankless labour. That was what one got for meddling in that kind of Native matters in the colony. He hoped the usual course laid down by the Standing Orders would be pursued in this case.

Bill read the second time.

MAJOR KEMP.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA moved, *That the evidence taken before the Native Affairs Committee upon the petition No. 3 of Major Kemp be printed.* He said it was desirable that the evidence of Wi Parata and Major Kemp, given before the Committee, should be printed, as it dealt with a very important matter. He thought the reasons for the petition should be printed, so that they could be read by Europeans and Natives. It must not be said that the Natives had no right to what they asked for. Other races, Europeans, and natives of other countries, had all asked for similar powers; and it was only by reading what they brought forward in support of their claims that they could tell whether or not it was right to grant their request. He hoped the Colonial Secretary would not oppose the motion.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said he hoped his honourable friend would not press his request at present, because the papers had only just been laid on the table, and he was sure honourable members had not had an opportunity of reading them. He thought no good purpose could be served by printing the evidence of Wi Parata and Major Kemp in connection with what was known as the Maori Parliament. He would be only too glad to afford his honourable friend any assistance in connection with any matters in which he was interested. He would ask him to, at any rate, postpone this motion until honourable members had had an opportunity of reading the papers. He did not think it desirable that a matter of that sort should be printed and placed upon their records, as it was not of a sufficiently serious nature.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it would be advisable to refer the evidence to the Printing Committee. He had looked over it, and he thought the printing of such matter would be simply ruinous. He thought it was useless printing documents that were of no earthly use, and that were never read by a single individual. What was the use of filling up the blue-book with matter of that sort? He would move, *That the evidence be referred to the Printing Committee.*

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN was unable to see much difference between the two propositions: perhaps his honourable friend's perception was keener than his own. He quite agreed with the

view taken by the Hon. the Colonial Secretary on the question, and thought that the papers ought not to be printed at present. He did not think, as a matter of order, that the papers were really in the charge of the Council at all, because the Native Affairs Committee, which had given a great deal of time and attention to the question, had recommended that all the documents should be referred to the Government for consideration, and until such consideration had been bestowed he thought the papers should not be printed. He would vote against the motion.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE said he hoped it would be borne in mind that they did not usually pay a great deal of attention to what the Natives thought. This was a matter in which they were interested. This chief had given evidence before the Native Affairs Committee, and was a spokesman of a large section of the Natives. He should not, probably, support the prayer of the petitioners, but he thought that a certain amount of respect was due. The cost would be very small. If this were done it would be one of those courtesies which would go a long way towards softening a refusal, if such were determined upon. He had often remarked that the Natives were, as a rule, satisfied if they felt that their case had been properly gone into. On some occasions the requests were absolutely pooh-poohed, so that, instead of having such matters settled at once, they came up again and again, until the steps that probably ought to have been taken in the first instance were taken. If the speech delivered by this chief before the Native Affairs Committee were given publicity to, that would go a long way towards showing that they did not wish to burke the opinions of the Natives.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN understood his honourable friend to say that he wanted the whole of the evidence printed.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—No; only that one speech.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN said that when his honourable friend thought the matter over he would agree that those proceedings should not be printed. With regard to the motion of the Hon. Mr. Reynolds, to refer the evidence to the Printing Committee, he did not think that Committee should be troubled with such papers, as the Council was quite capable of deciding what action should be taken. He agreed with the remark of the Colonial Secretary that the papers were not of sufficient importance to be printed.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said, if the Council had once agreed to entertain the petition it became, part and parcel, the property of the House; and so did the report. Under these circumstances, the usual course was to have the evidence printed, and he did not see why an exception should be made in this case. Having gone so far as to refer the petition to a Committee to receive the evidence, he did not see how they could very well refuse the request to print it.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS explained that in moving that the evidence be referred to the

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Printing Committee he meant it to be decided by that Committee whether or not the evidence should be printed. He did so because honourable members had not seen the papers, and therefore could not say what should be done.

Motion to refer the evidence to the Printing Committee negatived.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA did not think it was a great deal to ask, that this evidence be printed. If this request were refused he thought it would cause dissatisfaction, not only to Major Kemp, but to all those whom he represented on the occasion to which it related. They must bear in mind that the petition was signed by twenty-one thousand Natives, representing more than half the Native population; and if the printing were refused it would at once be taken for granted that the Council were throwing out the prayer of the petitioners altogether. He thought they should at least hear their prayer, and consider whether or not it should be granted. Major Kemp, when he was giving his evidence before the Committee, said he hoped the evidence would be printed. He (Mr. Taiaroa) told him that he thought it would be printed, and that he would move in that direction. He believed other members of the Committee also led Major Kemp to understand the same. There were only two witnesses called, and he thought their evidence might be printed. There was money being wasted on many other things which were not nearly so important. He would endeavour to have his motion carried, so that the Natives might not think that the Government were hiding their evidence.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY said only he himself and the Chairman of the Native Affairs Committee had had an opportunity of reading the evidence. He had asked the honourable gentleman to postpone his motion; but, as he did not seem willing to take his (Sir P. A. Buckley's) advice, he was afraid he could not help him.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA said he did not say that the honourable gentleman wished to hide the evidence. What he wished to say was that, if they refused to print the evidence, the Natives would consider that they were hiding it, and did not wish it to be made public. The petition came from the greater part of the Native race, and that was why he thought they should allow them to see the evidence. When Sir Robert Stout was referring to matters connected with the petition of Tawhiao, he said that the Natives had their members in the House, and that they were parties to the passing of the Act. Now, this application was made by himself, a Maori member, and he thought the Council ought to grant what was asked. That was why he asked the Council to agree to the motion.

The Council divided.

AYES, 24.

Acland	Dignan	Kenny
Barnicoat	Feldwick	Kerr
Bolt	Jennings	Mantell
Buckley	Johnston	McCullough

Oliver	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
Ormond	Stewart	Wahawaha
Pharazyn	Swanson	Whitmore
Rigg	Taiaroa	Williams.

NOES, 11.

Bonar	Kelly	Reynolds
Hart	McLean	Richardson
Holmes	Montgomery	Stevens.
Jenkinson	Pollen	

Majority for, 13.

Motion agreed to.

NATIVE TRUSTS AND CLAIMS DEFINITION AND REGISTRATION BILL.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY, in moving, *That this Bill be now read the second time*, said that when this Bill was first introduced in another place it was of a somewhat important character, but the Native Affairs Committee had reduced it almost to simplicity. It was practically for the purpose of doing justice to a number of Natives under what was known as the Whakatane Grants Validation Act. Under that Act they had obtained certain areas of land, and the names of certain chiefs were inserted in the grants in trust for the tribes. The chiefs named in the Bill had been receiving the rents, and the Bill proposed that the various hapus entitled to the rents should be given a power of keeping those rents for themselves. He proposed to send the Bill to the Native Affairs Committee, where, no doubt, it would be thoroughly investigated.

The Hon. Mr. TAIAROA was very glad to hear from the Colonial Secretary that the Bill was going to the Native Affairs Committee. As far as he could understand, the Bill seemed to contain some very important provisions, and it appeared to him to convey the powers contained in certain Crown grants and certificates. It seemed to imply that the lands would be taken out of the hands of those Natives who were now holding them under the provisions of the Crown grants. In some cases, of course, the grantees were practically trustees for other Natives; but he had no doubt the Bill might be made to apply to other cases where the land belonged solely to the grantees and their heirs. It also appeared that it was proposed that the land should be cut up and subdivided amongst other Natives. He also noticed that the provisions of the Bill were not intended to apply to any lands that the trustees in the cases might have sold to Europeans. He would like to explain more fully what he meant. For instance, supposing a block was called Manganui, and this was awarded to ten Natives, and these trustees might have sold a portion of the block to Europeans or to the Government. There might be another block, and they could call it, for convenience' sake, the Maungatua Block. Some of the Natives might be trustees in that block, but under the Bill that block might be subdivided and handed over to a thousand Natives; but as regarded the other block that had been sold, the Bill would not give power to rectify that trouble. In one case the Native owners

would be satisfied, and in the other case they would get no satisfaction whatever. He fancied that the provisions of the Bill tended in that direction: they would possibly give relief where the lands had not been sold, but no relief would be given where the lands had been parted with. He could not go fully into the different clauses of the Bill, because he had not received a final translation. Therefore he could not be very clear as to the provisions of the Bill, and he must refrain from entering on the details.

Bill read the second time.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 25th August, 1893.

First Readings—Notices in Lobby as to Members—Child arrested at Devonport—Destitute Natives—Salvation Army—Flax—Lyttelton Wharf-labourers—Ministers Travelling-allowances—Defence Engineers—Sergeant Instructors—Railway Saloon-carriages—Commandant of the Forces—Weber-Wimbleton Mail-service—Tree-planting—School Songs—Imperial-guaranteed Debentures—Teachers' Superannuation—Portraits of Eminent Members—Rabbit-poisoning—Wire-netting—Christchurch Clergy—Otorohanga Native Land Court—Dunedin Hospital—Bull's State-school Teacher—Eyre and Ashley Rivers—Deferred-payment Thirds—Prison Warders and Matrons—N. Fryday—Government Insurance Mortgages—Lyttelton Shipping-office, &c.—Gambling in Clubs—Government Legal Business—Bonus to Iron Industry—Auckland Rifle Association—Co-operative Works—Order Paper—Amounts paid to Members—Manawatu Railway Company—Friendly Societies—Codlin-moth—Imperial-guaranteed Debentures—Local Tax on Unimproved Land—Electoral Districts—Criminal Code Bill—Detectives—Labour Department—N. Fryday—Mines Statement and Report—Napier-Taupo, &c., Roads—Adjournment—Order of Business—Land-scrip—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Lyttelton Orphanage Lands Vesting Bill, Public Works Bill, Tramways Bill, Colliery Railways Vesting Bill, Legislative Officers' Salaries Bill.

NOTICES IN LOBBY AS TO MEMBERS.

Mr. SPEAKER said, before calling on the business of the day he might mention that that day his attention was drawn to a notice which was stuck up on the notice-board in the lobby, upon which was a memorandum referring to the private affairs of an honourable member. This he considered improper, and he had the document taken down. Honourable members should not use the public notice-board in the lobby for the purpose of putting up any intimation of that kind.

CHILD ARRESTED AT DEVONPORT.

Mr. MITCHELSON wished to ask the Premier a question without notice. On the pre-

vious day he had intended asking the same question, but owing to the forms of the House he did not get an opportunity of doing so. At half-past two o'clock on the previous day he received a telegram from a resident at Devonport, informing him that an intense feeling had been caused throughout the district by the arrest of a child six years of age, and the constable insisting upon taking the child out of bed early in the morning, notwithstanding the protests made by relatives of the child. The child was arrested for stealing a fishing-line. It appeared an extraordinary thing that the police should arrest a child of such an age, when the family had raised a very strong protest against it. He would therefore ask whether the Premier had any information on the subject, and if he would cause inquiries to be made as to the truth or otherwise of the statement, and the reasons why the policeman took such an extraordinary step.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member for Parnell gave him a telegram last evening similar to that which had just been read by the honourable member for Eden. He immediately sent it to the Commissioner of Police, and told him to ask for a report at once upon the occurrence. He had not received a reply; but as soon as he received one during the course of the afternoon he would let the honourable gentleman know what the Inspector reported. If the statement in the telegram was correct, he should certainly say that a very harsh proceeding had taken place. He might also say, in regard to another case, that of beating a child, which had been reported in the papers, and in regard to which it had been stated that there was an attempt to suppress evidence, he had insisted on a full investigation of that case. The Minister of Justice was also making inquiries on this subject.

Subsequently,

Mr. SEDDON read the following telegram which he had received from the Commissioner of Police:—

"25th August, 1893,

"Hon. W. P. Reeves,

Minister of Justice, Wellington.

"On Sunday last a man named O'Neill reported to Constable Knowles that three fishing-lines, value five shillings, which he had set that morning, were stolen, and that he had seen a boat in the distance. The constable accompanied him to where the boat was, at Shoal Bay. They saw four boys, who on being spoken to admitted having taken the lines, saying they thought they had been left by picnickers. The constable arrested the boys, whose ages range from fifteen to sixteen, and brought them to Auckland, and it is alleged he refused to allow them to wait for tea. They were bailed out that evening by a Magistrate. Next morning he arrested two brothers named O'Connell, aged eight and six years. They were in bed at the time. It is alleged he dragged them out of bed, and would not allow them to wait for breakfast. The cause for arresting the two younger boys was that one of the others said they were also in the boat at the time the lines

were taken. All were discharged on Monday morning, after a strong admonition from the Bench. It was sworn in evidence that the constable used very strong language to the sister of the two little boys at the time of arrest. I am of opinion that the constable did not exercise good judgment in arresting them, as the property was not taken out of any house or premises, and the boys were not known offenders. He certainly was not justified in arresting the two younger boys. I am now holding an inquiry, and will report first mail.

"J. HICKSON,

"Inspector, Auckland."

If the facts as disclosed in that telegram were correct, he might say he questioned very much whether the constable would have the opportunity of doing the same thing again.

DESTITUTE NATIVES.

Mr. LAKE asked the Government if they had received any reply from Mr. Wilkinson, the Native Agent at Otorohanga, as to distress existing amongst the Natives owing to the recent Waikato floods.

Mr. CARROLL informed the honourable gentleman that he had wired to Mr. Wilkinson about the matter which the honourable gentleman had brought up the other evening; and he would read Mr. Wilkinson's answer. This was the telegram:—

"23rd August, 1893.

"Hon. J. Carroll, Acting Native Minister.

"As the result of the late flood, and also the one in January last, there is very great destitution amongst the Natives living on the banks of Waikato River, from Onewhero to Ngauruhia, and on the banks of Waipa River as far as mouth of Puniu River and Whatihathioe, near Alexandra. The Puniu River being the boundary of the Rohe Potae Block, many of the Natives within it are considerable land-owners, and could relieve their present necessities if they would dispose of some of their surplus lands. There are some of them, however, who have very little other land than what they are living on—notably those living at and in the vicinity of Tepuhi Station, about two and a half miles from Te Awamutu; also some Ngatiapakura Natives living at a settlement called Kahotea, about two miles from here. I have already sent full particulars to Under-Secretary, Justice Department, as to Natives who were destitute through the January flood, with suggestions as to their relief, and on Monday last I posted further petition from Natives for relief, also cutting from the *New Zealand Herald* bearing on the matter. The Natives require eating-potatoes for their present necessities, and seed-potatoes to plant for a new crop. The planting-season is close at hand, and many of the able-bodied Natives would gladly take road-work to enable them to earn money to buy food; and repairs to roads are very much required in Kawhia, Raglan, and Waipa Counties.

"G. T. WILKINSON,
"Native Agent, Otorohanga."

Mr. Mitchelson

The following reply had been sent to that telegram:—

"24th August, 1893.

"G. T. Wilkinson, Esq., Otorohanga.

"Re your telegram to Hon. Mr. Carroll, the Survey Department on 12th instant authorised Chief Surveyor, Auckland, to spend £100 on road-work to be done by destitute Natives at Whatiwhatiho, and the Road Surveyor at Otorohanga to give work on Stratford Road. Please tell me whether more is required, and state definitely what you recommend to be done. Any urgent cases of distress you may relieve at once. "C. J. A. HASLDEN."

He might add that instructions had been given by the department to see that this matter was attended to, and every available help would be given.

SALVATION ARMY.

Mr. TAYLOR said he had received the following telegram from "Colonel" Bailey, of the Salvation Army:—

"Resolution carried unanimously Sydenham Barracks last evening, requesting you convey Minister Justice great indignation sentence passed Resident Magistrate, Milton, nineteenth, on Captain Kerr, one month with hard labour, or three pounds fine, for playing cornet contrary to by-law. Meeting claims by-law illegal; contrary liberty of citizens everywhere.

"COLONEL BAILEY,

"Salvation Army, Christchurch."

It was contended that the by-laws were illegal, and he trusted the Minister would do something to remove from the records of the Court such a scandal as he had referred to.

Mr. REEVES would be very happy to make the inquiry which the honourable gentleman suggested. It was quite true that sometimes in one's life one was tempted to wish that all people who played cornets might be summarily dealt with. It would, however, be certainly grossly unfair to make any exception so as to press upon the Salvation Army, whose good work they all appreciated.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister whether any instructions on this matter had been given to the police since the present Government entered in office, because he understood a circular had been issued to the police instructing them not to interfere with these people unless there was some very great occasion for it.

Mr. REEVES was certainly not aware that any instructions likely to cause these cases to be dealt with more stringently had been issued—certainly not from the Justice Department since he had had anything to do with it.

Mr. FERGUS said it was not a Justice matter; it was a police matter.

Mr. REEVES said Yes, but there had certainly been no such instructions issued from the Justice Department.

FLAX.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That power be given to the Industries Committee to draw up regulations in relation to a bonus that might

be voted by the House in connection with the flax industry.

Mr. ALLEN asked if that referred only to the flax industry; because there were other industries in connection with which bonuses had been recommended by previous Parliamentary Committees, but which bonuses had not been gazetted. There was one about which he had a question on the Order Paper. Did the Minister mean the House to understand that he would propose to offer bonuses with regard to other industries which had not been gazetted, or did he wish the House to refer that question to any Committee?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said if the honourable gentleman would bring before him any other matter he would be glad to give it consideration. He wished to have this matter forwarded at the present time for the purpose of having these regulations dealt with. The department had prepared certain regulations, but he wished the Committee to look over them and see if they were satisfied. However, this would not prevent any other bonuses from being considered by the Committee at a future time, and he would be glad to move in that direction.

LYTTELTON WHARF-LABOURERS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Lands, if he will favourably consider a proposition to purchase, under the provisions of an Act of last session, a sufficient area of land adjoining Lyttelton so as to enable wharf-labourers to occupy holdings of from five to ten acres; the Minister to provide (in connection with a Labour Bureau) such semaphores whereby the labourers could work at their usual calling at stated periods and utilise their spare time in farming their agricultural holdings?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was not aware that there were any lands very suitable for small settlement in close proximity to Lyttelton, but he would be glad to consider any offer made to him with regard to land that might be suitable for settlement under the Land for Settlement Act.

MINISTERS' TRAVELLING-ALLOWANCES.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Government,—If the sum of £876 for "Travelling-allowances of Ministers" (besides £713 14s. 11d. for travelling-expenses of Ministers), appearing in the details of expenditure under the vote "General contingencies" in the Colonial Secretary's Department, is included in the sum of £1,849 10s. as "Travelling-allowance to Ministers" appearing in the Unauthorised Expenditure Account for the financial year ended 31st March last?

Mr. WARD.—Yes.

DEFENCE ENGINEERS.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government has, in accordance with the report of Colonel Fox, Commandant of the Forces in New Zealand, advised his Excellency the Governor to apply to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief to engage for a term of three years a duly-qualified

officer of the Royal Engineers, who has an "intimate knowledge of submarine-mining requirements and of works of construction," to take up the position of Defence Engineer for the colony?

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had not, in accordance with this recommendation, advised that an officer of the Royal Engineers should be sent for. He had promised the House that it should have an opportunity of considering Colonel Fox's report, and the Government had not done anything in anticipation of that report being discussed.

Mr. ALLEN asked, what day would the Minister name for the discussion?

Mr. SEDDON said he had intended taking it on Monday evening next, but the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, who would be away on that day, had asked him to postpone the matter, and he had agreed to do so.

Mr. FERGUS.—Till when?

Mr. SEDDON.—Till the honourable gentleman returned.

SERGEANT INSTRUCTORS.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Defence, Whether the Government has advised His Excellency the Governor to apply to His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief to allow six sergeant instructors to be employed by the colony as instructors, in accordance with Colonel Fox's report, page 42?

Mr. SEDDON said his answer would be the same as that given to the previous question.

RAILWAY SALOON-CARRIAGES.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Premier,—(1.) Whether the Railway Commissioners have imported the whole or part of materials for construction of new saloon-carriages recently built at the Government railway-shops? (2.) Will the Premier obtain from the Railway Commissioners a photograph of one of those saloon-carriages, and place the same in the lobby of the House? (3.) And will the Premier also state whether such carriages cost the colony a greater or lesser amount than would be paid for carriages of similar class and style imported from England or America?

Mr. SEDDON said the Commissioners' reply was as follows:—

"The Commissioners will be glad to furnish the photograph required. All carriages are built in the colony. The only articles imported in a manufactured state are the steel tires and the rolled channel-bars. Owing to the freight on this class of vehicle it is cheaper to build in the colony than to import from America or England."

COMMANDANT OF THE FORCES.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Defence, Whether Colonel Fox has been ordered to assume the position of Commandant of the Forces and to "take up the official duties"? If so, has that officer undertaken the duties of Commandant of the Forces?

Mr. SEDDON said Colonel Fox, from the date of his arrival in the colony, had been doing

duty as Commandant of the Forces, and his appointment dated, he thought, from January of last year.

WEBER-WIMBLEDON MAIL-SERVICE.

Mr. W. C. SMITH asked the Postmaster-General, If he will have a weekly mail-service established between Weber Township and Wimbledon, this being urgently required by the settlers in these districts? The settlers were very anxious that inquiries should be made into the matter, with the view of establishing the necessary convenience.

Mr. WARD said he would be very glad to make inquiries into the matter and communicate with the honourable gentleman.

TREE-PLANTING.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Agriculture, If he will arrange to have a sum placed on the supplementary estimates to assist horticultural societies throughout the colony in the planting of suitable trees on Arbor Day?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government did not see their way to make the grant asked for in this question.

SCHOOL SONGS.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Minister of Education, If he will have compiled a select collection of school songs to be used in our public schools, so as to encourage and develop amongst the youth of the colony a national and patriotic sentiment? The Minister must recognise that song was an important factor in school life, and that it was conducive to the cultivation of a national sentiment. This was recognised in the schools of the United States, Germany, and other countries. He hoped, therefore, the Minister would see his way to accept the suggestion contained in the question.

Mr. REEVES quite agreed with what the honourable gentleman said, and he might inform him that he would take care that on the School Readers being compiled the matter should, as far as possible, be selected with a view of doing what the honourable gentleman suggested.

IMPERIAL-GUARANTEED DEBENTURES.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Colonial Treasurer, How much of the £1,204,000 of Treasury bills outstanding on the 30th June last was issued under the special authority contained in section 2 of "The Public Revenues Act, 1892," "for the purpose of redeeming a like amount of guaranteed debentures issued under 'The Immigration and Public Works Loan Act, 1870'?" He would simply point out that up to the 31st March last the issue of Treasury bills was honestly stated—that was, so much in anticipation of revenue and so much for redemption of debentures. Now, however, they were lumped together; hence the necessity for his question.

Mr. WARD said the amount was £356,000. He did not think, however, that the honourable member was justified by what had taken place in implying that this information was not

Mr. Hamlin

now honestly shown. It was perfectly honestly shown. Members on the opposite side of the House must know that in connection with the finances of the colony there were sometimes delicate operations being carried on, in respect of which it would not be justifiable on his part to give that information which honourable members without responsibility, and without knowing the circumstances connected with the operations, were desirous of obtaining. It was not always convenient for information of that sort to be disclosed. He had no object whatever in withholding information from members on that side of the House; but, on the other hand, when it was furnished it should be ample and full. Still, while these operations were going on, it was not desirable in the interests of the colony, altogether apart from the interest of the Government, that the information should be disclosed.

Mr. RICHARDSON said he recognised the position, and if the Colonial Treasurer would inform members on his side of the House when this was the fact they would accept the assurance at once, though it could not apply in this case.

TEACHERS' SUPERANNUATION.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister of Education, if his attention has been called to the report of the conference of Wellington, Wanganui, and Hawke's Bay teachers, held at Palmerston North? If so, will he bring in a measure to give effect to the proposals carried at that conference for a teachers' superannuation scheme? In case the Minister had not received the resolutions mentioned in the question, he took the opportunity of putting them on record. They were as follow:—

“Mr. Grant moved, and Mr. Anderson seconded, that the following be adopted: (1.) That 1 per cent. be deducted by Education Boards from the salaries of all teachers above twenty years of age. (2.) That Government subsidies by special vote the sum so funded, giving pound for pound. (3.) That the total sum deducted from salaries be refunded to teachers who voluntarily resign the service, and, in case of re-entering, the sum be repaid before appointment. (4.) That the deductions be forfeited in cases of dismissal, from whatever cause. (5.) That retirement be compulsory at the age of sixty-five. (6.) That the superannuation allowance be apportioned year by year by the Education Department according to the number entitled to participate in it, the basis being, as far as practicable, one-sixtieth of the salary at the time of retirement for each year of the first thirty years of service (that is, half-pay), and one-thirtieth of salary for each of the subsequent fifteen years of service (that is, full pay after forty-five years' service); but the amount available each year be divided as the public libraries subsidies used to be. (7.) In case of a death before sixty-five years, the total sum deducted from salaries together with the Government subsidy be paid to the heir-at-law of the deceased teacher. (8.) In case of the death of any teacher over twenty years of

age, whether in active service or on retiring-allowance, Education Boards make a levy on the salaries of all teachers above twenty years of age of 1s. each below £200, and of 2s. each above £200, and that the sum collected be paid by the Education Department to the heir-at-law of the deceased teacher. (9.) That an empowering clause be added to the Education Act to enable Education Boards to enforce deductions and levies specified. (10.) That there be deducted from the payments to be made at the retirement or death of any teacher a sum equal to £2 for every year that his age exceeds twenty years at the time of the adoption of this scheme—e.g., a teacher now fifty years of age would have £2 x 30, or £60, deducted—as an equivalent to the deductions to be made from salaries.”

Perhaps he could scarcely ask, as he had done in the question, that a measure should be brought in at this late period of the session to deal with the question of a superannuation scheme for teachers; but every one must recognise the importance of the matter, and would doubtless be glad to assist the Minister were he to bring in a measure this session. He (Mr. Wilson) might, at any rate, urge him to seriously consider such an important question, for it was one which should be dealt with by the House. He trusted the Minister would give him a promise to deal with this subject at an early date.

Mr. REEVES thought the honourable gentleman was quite right as to the desirability of the matter, but the Government could not consider the proposals of the conference until they had been officially informed of them.

PORTRAITS OF EMINENT MEMBERS.

Mr. FISHER asked the Government, Whether they will place on the supplementary estimates the sum of £150, or other sum, for the purchase of the portraits of Sir David Monro, Sir F. D. Bell, Sir William Fitzherbert, Sir Maurice O'Rorke, Sir Harry Atkinson, and Sir George Grey? The sum of £150 might prove to be a quite inadequate amount for the purpose of giving effect to the proposal contained in the question. He wished only to ascertain from the Government whether they would be favourable to the proposal or not.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government thought this was one of those matters which would be better dealt with by good colonists and those who appreciated the services of the gentlemen whose names were given in the question, and he would like to see the honourable gentleman and others moving in this direction. He thought it was a very proper thing to do, but he did not think it ought to be done out of the public funds.

RABBIT-POISONING.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister of Lands, Whether any provision is made for rabbit-poisoning commencing in districts on one given day? If so, is this provision carried out? If not, will he so provide? For the purpose of explaining this question, he would take the

opportunity of quoting a letter which he had received from one of his constituents. This gentleman said,—

"The point is *re poisoning*. The Inspector issues a notice in the local Press stating at what time poisoning is to commence; but, according to the present Act, he has no power to enforce simultaneous action. Now, I am quite satisfied that, to obtain the best results, the Inspector requires authority to make it compulsory that every man in the same district start on the same date. Take a case in point: I start on advertised date, my neighbour lets it run for three or four weeks later, and the result is that my land is stocked afresh from adjoining properties before they lay a grain of poison."

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the extract from a letter which the honourable gentleman had just read exactly answered the question. The department generally tried to get property-owners to poison at the same time, but there was no power to compel them to do so on the same date. Now, there was a good deal to be said on both sides of the question. To get people to poison on the same date, the land would have to be equally suitable for poisoning. If one day were proposed for the poisoning of the Tokomairiro or Bruce district, for instance, some portion of the country over which it was proposed to lay the poison might perhaps not be suitable at all for the feed, or some of the land might be of such a sort that rabbits would not take the poison. No doubt, discretionary power should be left in the hands of the people themselves as to the time suitable for poisoning; and he did not think they could make it possible that the whole of the poisoning in the colony, or even of a district, should be fixed for one day, because if they did so they would have to employ a very large number of men. Take the case of a run of twenty thousand acres: he believed if they compelled poison to be laid over all the land of a district in one day it would require an army of about a hundred men on such a run to carry it out. Generally, as they knew, at the present time what the property-owners did was to employ a staff to poison in the winter, and they did it gradually; but to do it all in one day would, as he said, require a very large number of men to be simultaneously employed for the purpose. However, they endeavoured to get the people to work as well as they could on one day, when the Inspectors did their best to get settlers to work together. They generally arranged these matters after consultation with the settlers themselves.

WIRE-NETTING.

Mr. ALLEN asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether a bonus for the manufacture in New Zealand of wire-netting has been gazetted? If not, will he gazette the same, and place a sum on the supplementary estimates for this purpose? In asking this question he might say that the manufacture of wire-netting had been going on for some time in New Zealand, and one man he knew of had from twenty to

thirty men employed in the work, and would be entitled to the bonus if it were gazetted. He was not sure whether it was gazetted or not. If not, he hoped the Minister would gazette it at once, and put a sum for the purpose on the supplementary estimates, so that this man who was entitled to the bonus might secure it.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said a bonus for the manufacture of wire-netting was suggested in 1890, but it had never been gazetted, and he intended to consider the question as to whether it should be gazetted now or not. At any rate, he knew of the gentleman manufacturing this wire-netting to whom the honourable gentleman had referred, but he did not think he could claim the bonus at present, or until such time as the Government had, by public notice, invited all to compete for it. He would consider the matter. He knew the gentleman to whom the honourable member referred, and he believed it was a very deserving case.

CHRISTCHURCH CLERGY.

Sir J. HALL asked the Government, Whether they have considered the petition of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Christchurch, showing that the small incomes paid to the clergy in that diocese are subjected to a heavy graduated land-tax; also, whether they have considered the report of the Public Petitions Committee recommending this case to the favourable consideration of the Government; and, if so, what relief the Government proposes to afford? He would in a few words explain the circumstances which necessitated this question. The Church of England clergy in the Diocese of Christchurch were supported partly from the proceeds of landed property, which was purchased out of the contributions of the first Canterbury land-purchases. This property consisted not of a large landed estate, but of a number of town and country properties which were all beneficially occupied. The income permitted of only a small contribution being made to the incomes of poorly-paid clergy. The recent introduction of the graduated land-tax had increased the taxation of this property by about 60 per cent., and a considerable reduction had to be made in the small contributions he had mentioned. These facts were set forth in a petition to the House. It had been carefully inquired into by the Petitions Committee, which recommended it to the favourable consideration of the Government, with a view to some relief being afforded. He hoped to receive a favourable answer from the Government.

Mr. WARD might inform honourable members that there were difficulties in the way of doing that which was asked, and which, as the honourable gentleman stated, the Public Petitions Committee had favourably recommended. The Government had considered the matter very carefully, and he was bound to confess that, if they endeavoured to deal with this particular case, it seemed to him that it would open the door to further and greater exemptions in a way that was scarcely contemplated.

Mr. Allen

However, the whole question was one which was still under consideration. It had not been finally dealt with yet, because it was a very difficult matter to deal with in the way the Public Petitions Committee had recommended. However, it would have his best consideration.

OTOROHANGA NATIVE LAND COURT.

Mr. SHERA asked the Minister in Charge of Native Affairs, When the Native Land Court will resume work at Otorohanga, in the King-country, as it is now over seven months since the Native Land Court was closed there? The Native Land Court at Otorohanga was closed about eight months ago, in opposition to the strong representations of a great many of the Auckland people, who understood that it would resume operations in a very short time. But eight months had now elapsed, and still there was no prospect of its resuming. He hoped the Minister in charge would be able to assure them that it would be opened in a very short time.

Mr. CARROLL said the present position was this: The Judges were engaged in other places, and, as they were likely to be so engaged for some months, they could not at present go to Otorohanga. However, the Government would look into the matter, with the view of settling, as soon as possible, a date for the opening of the Court at Otorohanga. He could not say more than that at the present time.

DUNEDIN HOSPITAL.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Justice, Seeing there is an invidious reference in the Report of the Inspector of Hospitals and Charitable Institutions to a grant—characterized as a “large grant”—of £8,000 voted to the Dunedin Hospital last session, is the Minister aware that, in proportion to its population and contributions to the public revenue, Dunedin has received less public money than any other portion of the colony; and, further, is he aware that a return of Government grants to the various colonial hospitals, asked for this session, either cannot or will not be furnished to the House?

Mr. REEVES said he could not say he was aware of what the honourable gentleman stated in his questions. What he was aware of was, that it would appear that, before the Dunedin Hospital was handed over to the General Government, something like £20,000 had been expended on it. A return had been moved for by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Pinkerton) of all moneys spent on these institutions. The return had not been supplied, for the reason that the information could not be got owing to many of the old provincial records being incomplete. But, since telling the honourable gentleman that, they had arranged that a return should be prepared showing all expenditure on these institutions since the abolition of the provinces: that return was now being prepared, and would be laid on the table.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said the honourable gentleman had not answered the first part of the question.

Mr. REEVES said he had done so: he said he was not aware of the fact.

BULLS STATE-SCHOOL TEACHER.

Mr. BRUCE asked the Minister of Education,—(1.) If he is aware of the dismissal of Mr. Thomson, late State-school teacher at Bull's? (2.) If he is aware that the alleged reason for such dismissal was incompetency, although he had held the position for thirteen years, was a Home-trained teacher, and classed C1 in the colony? (3.) Is he aware that the examination-card used by the Inspector was unnecessarily severe, and believed to be beyond the regulations? (4.) If aware of and believing in the accuracy of the foregoing allegations, would he be prepared to grant an inquiry with the view of re-establishing the reputation of one whom many believe to be a deeply-injured man, and, if possible, reinstate him in the position of State-school teacher? He had been requested to put this question. He might tell the Minister that there was a very considerable amount of feeling in reference to the question, and he thought the case was one of very great hardship if it was as represented to him; and if it was so he would be justified in using very much stronger language. The facts, as they were represented to him, were shortly these: This Mr. Thomson, to whom the question referred, was a gentleman with whom he was not personally acquainted, but from his reputation he appeared to be a man of the highest character. He had been for thirteen years a State-school teacher in the same place, and had filled the position with credit to himself and advantage to that part of the colony in which he was resident. Now he had been suddenly dismissed, after being thirteen years in the service, after he had passed the meridian of life; and the cause of his dismissal was stated to be incompetency. It was alleged that the questions put to his pupils were unnecessarily severe, and in consequence of this he was unable to obtain the average percentage of standard passes. He had also the authority of one than who no one was more competent to form an opinion that the case was one of great hardship, and one in which the Board had behaved in a tyrannical manner. He was also informed that Mr. Thomson had been illegally dismissed; but he did not wish to call this matter to the attention of the House, because Mr. Thomson had his remedy against the Board. But what he wished to point out was this: If it was the case that he had been dismissed in consequence of alleged incompetency, and if that alleged incompetency was in consequence of an unnecessarily strict examination to which his pupils were subjected, then in such a case he would not be introducing debatable matter when he said there ought to be for school-teachers dismissed under such circumstances the right of appeal to another tribunal. He felt strongly in reference to the case, although, as he had said, he was not personally acquainted with

Mr. Thomson, but he was pretty sure, from what he had heard, that this was a case of some hardship.

Mr. REEVES said he believed Mr. Thomson had been dismissed—the Government had been informed of that by Mr. Thomson. It was the case that he held a Privy Council certificate and a colonial certificate. All he could say of the manner and reasons of the dismissal was this: It appeared that for some five years there had been dissatisfaction with the results of the test-examinations for the upper standards in his school. It would appear that there was some intention that if these results did not improve something should be done. It also appeared that the action of the Board was laid before the School Committee and considered by them, and that the teacher had an opportunity, or was requested, to answer these complaints against him. Therefore he (Mr. Reeves) could not see that, *prima facie*, a case of illegality had been made out; but, even if it had, he had no power to interfere.

Mr. BRUCE asked to be allowed to explain that what he had said in reference to the charge of illegal dismissal was this: that the Board had not consulted the Committee, as provided by Act, before dismissing the teacher.

Mr. REEVES said it appeared to him, with regard to the School Committee, that the Inspector's report was discussed by the Committee, and that the teacher criticized that report at the request of the Committee, and thus, to a certain extent, the matter had been before the Committee. Whether the Board ever consulted the Committee he could not say. The honourable gentleman was correct in saying that Mr. Thomson had held the office for thirteen years. In all this, however, he (Mr. Reeves) had no function—it was outside his province; but there was one point which was not, and that was the question of the test-card. The matter had been referred to him—a certain test-card used by an Inspector in Wanganui in 1891 had been referred to him—and he had informed the Inspector that in his opinion two of the questions in arithmetic were unduly severe. He might say, in conclusion, that he entirely concurred in the remark of the honourable gentleman—that some sort of right of appeal ought to be given to school-teachers in case of dismissal. He did not think they should be put in such an entirely inferior position to Civil servants as they now were, considering the high character of most of them, and the exceedingly important functions they had to fill.

Mr. BRUCE asked if it was in the Minister's power to grant any inquiry into the circumstances, with the object of eliciting such information as would enable him during the recess to consider the question of establishing such a tribunal.

Mr. REEVES said he was afraid he had no more power to go into the matter than the Colonial Secretary would have to go into the question of the dismissal of a town clerk by a municipal body.

Mr. Bruce

EYRE AND ASHLEY RIVERS.

Mr. MOORE asked the Minister for Public Works, Whether the Government will assist the local bodies in the Kaiapoi district to the extent of £1 for £1 on any money spent for the purpose of clearing the Rivers Eyre and Ashley of the gorse growing in these rivers, which has mainly been brought down from Crown lands on the adjacent hills, and, if allowed to spread, must be detrimental to the district?

Mr. SEDDON did not think they could apply the co-operative system to this class of work; he thought they would have more applications than they could provide for, and the honourable gentleman would no doubt agree with the Government that there should be no borrowing for the purpose. The matter was a small local one.

Mr. MOORE said the necessity for the work arose from the stuff being brought down from Crown lands.

Mr. SEDDON said in that case he would ask the Minister of Lands to make inquiries into the matter.

DEFERRED-PAYMENT THIRDS.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Minister of Lands, For what reason he has considered it necessary to issue a circular to local bodies prescribing needless and vexatious conditions in respect of the expenditure of deferred-payment thirds, &c.? His reason for putting the question was that he had received a communication from the Southland County Council on the matter, and he was led to believe that the circular they received was one which had been sent round to all the local bodies. The following resolution had been passed by the Council:—

"This Council, having carefully considered the circular from the Lands and Survey Office re expenditure of deferred-payment funds, desire to state that within their knowledge no reason has arisen to necessitate any departure from the present system, which has worked smoothly and satisfactorily to those interested; and the spirit of the Act has always been observed carefully. This Council unanimously considers it utterly impossible to give effect to instructions in part; and, in the main, is convinced that the proposed reform, for all practical purposes, is unworkable; and this Council could not attempt the expenditure under the suggested alteration."

He had also the report of the engineer of the Council, and this was what he said:—

"By that circular it is now required that the exact position, length, and character of the work to be done must be stated before the money is paid over. You will readily understand that this is absurd and unnecessary, for, in order to get the money, it means that the different localities must be visited and the work laid off, although in the list now submitted there is not one item of sufficient amount to make a decent contract; and, besides, it would not pay expenses in the majority of cases to send an official to see where such items as 1s. 8d., 2s., 4s., &c., are to be spent. The old

system, which has been in vogue for over twelve years, worked with perfect satisfaction, and the money was always spent in accordance with the Act, which is all that is required: an effort should therefore be made to have it reverted to. If this new idea is to be enforced it means the delay of the expenditure in many cases for an indefinite period. A great advantage of the old system was, apart from its simplicity, that in many cases the money could be anticipated and the work done partly out of the County Fund and deferred-payment; and the work could then be proceeded with without having to wait for the lists. And, moreover, there is not a single instance in this county where deferred-payment thirds are not supplemented by County Fund. As regards the latter part of the circular, where returns, &c., are asked for, I would recommend that this be declined, as our books and contracts can be inspected by those requiring information. Hitherto all the deferred-payment money expended by this Council has been expended where required by law, and nothing charged against it for expenses; but under this new method a heavy charge would require to be made to cover the cost of complying with the circular: in fact, an extra official would almost be fully occupied in attending to the deferred-payment business alone."

If certain counties neglected their duty or broke the law, the Land Boards should deal with such exceptional cases; and he thought that if one or two local bodies had not carried out the law and had not dealt fairly with the "thirds," that was a matter which might have been settled between those bodies and the Land Board, but was no reason for issuing a general circular.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the honourable gentleman was entirely mistaken in any supposition he had arrived at in regard to this matter. The Minister of Lands had not issued any circular on the subject whatsoever. But it was the duty of the Land Boards themselves, under section 126 of the Land Act, to ascertain that the thirds were expended for the benefit of the lands of the selectors who paid those thirds, and the Boards, in order to judge if the provision was being carried out, required particulars from the local bodies. He could assure the honourable gentleman that there had been no general circular on the subject at all. A great number of complaints had come up to Wellington to him, as Minister of Lands, as to the way in which these thirds were being dealt with by the County Councils and the Road Boards. He was not referring to the Southland County Council in particular. These letters were sent to the Commissioner of Crown Lands by him without any comment, and he supposed it was on account of these complaints that these instructions or regulations were issued, so that the Boards might know more on this subject. The honourable gentleman must be aware that the settlers who paid these thirds were entitled to have the thirds expended for their benefit. That had not been done in every case. He was not saying that the Southland County Coun-

cil had transgressed in the matter, but some local bodies had transgressed. To show that the thirds were to be spent for the purpose of giving access to the properties of those people who paid them, the Colonial Treasurer had power to make the local bodies disgorge if they had not spent the money properly for the purposes which the Act provided. He did not see that the House should interfere with the administration of the Land Boards on this subject. He was sure if it did so it would be making a mistake, for the Boards were the best judges in the matter. If such a regulation had been issued as the honourable gentleman referred to in regard to the expenditure of small sums amounting to a few shillings, the thing was absurd. It is absurd for any local body to be called upon to report upon the expenditure of small sums of money like that. But in new blocks, where the thirds amounted to large sums of money, the Board had a right to know from the local body how the money was being expended.

PRISON WARDERS AND MATRONS.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Justice, If the question of shortening hours of duty of warders and matrons of prisons has been considered by the Government?

Mr. REEVES said the hours had been modified, but he did not think they could be further modified.

N. FRYDAY.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Premier, If he will give effect to the report of the Commissioners on the case of N. Fryday?

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had the matter now under consideration, and when the estimates came down the honourable gentleman would, no doubt, see a reply to his question.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE MORTGAGES.

Mr. HOGG (on behalf of the member for Waimate) asked the Colonial Treasurer, Whether the rates charged by way of interest on moneys obtained on mortgage from the Government Insurance Department can be more nearly equalised—i.e., by reducing the rates for small sums—there now being a difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. between the rate charged for large and that charged for small amounts? He understood the lending of this money was referred to a Board. At the same time, he thought the difference of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. between the rate of interest charged to large borrowers and that charged to small borrowers was quite uncalled-for, and he hoped the Government would see their way to take the matter in hand, and, at all events, limit the functions of the Board in this respect, so that the small settlers might be able to get their money on reasonable terms.

Mr. WARD said there was a Board empowered by statute to deal with this matter. The Government could not interfere with the Board in the discharge of duties which were

laid down for them by statute. He would, however, draw their attention to the matter, and ask them to consider it.

LYTTELTON SHIPPING-OFFICE, ETC.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Lands, Will the Minister of Labour open a shipping-office and Labour Bureau at Lyttelton for the engagement of sailors for vessels, and for the regulation and division of all casual labour on the Lyttelton wharves, or in relation thereto, between and fairly amongst the six hundred labourers residing at Lyttelton?

Mr. REEVES said he would be very glad indeed to open such a branch of the Bureau at Lyttelton; but how he could control the regulation of casual labour on the wharves there he did not quite see. It really lay between the Harbour Board authorities and the Railway Commissioners. A few months hence they might possibly find the Commissioners more ready to meet the Government in the matter.

Mr. WRIGHT said it was not a question of the Railway Commissioners meeting the wishes of the Government. The question of the labour on the wharves at Lyttelton was a matter which rested between the Harbour Board and the Railway Commissioners, and the work had been done for many years past by the Commissioners entirely with the concurrence of the Board. There never had been a difference of any sort between them, nor any friction whatever; and it was simply as a matter of convenience to the Board, and in the interests of economy, that the Commissioners controlled the labour on the wharves.

GAMBLING IN CLUBS.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked the Premier,—(1.) If he is aware that gambling to a large extent is carried on for five nights in a week in a certain newly-established club in Wellington, and also in other clubs in the colony, to the serious injury of the young men who frequent these establishments? (2.) If the Minister is not so aware, will he make special inquiry into the same, and make suitable provision in his Alcoholic Liquor Bill for checking this illegal and pernicious practice?

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman had put the question in a way that he did not think was fair to the other clubs in Wellington. He should have thought the honourable gentleman would have named the club alluded to in the question. He (Mr. Seddon) had got no information whatever upon the subject. As regarded provision for checking this illegal and pernicious practice, no doubt the honourable gentleman had seen a clause in the Alcoholic Liquor Control Bill which placed all clubs under inspection, and would meet any case such as was alleged to have occurred.

Mr. FISHER moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of making a remark on the question. There could be no doubt as to which club this question referred to. He was not a member of the club, and was therefore

not concerned in the question; but he thought it exceedingly unfair to any club to put a question of that nature on the Order Paper. The question, as it appeared on the Order Paper, was the outcome of spite on the part of a single individual—a friend of Sir Robert Stout; and, unless some apology was offered in private by the individual, in the phraseology of the “lost dog” advertisement more would be heard of the matter.

Mr. EARNSHAW seconded the motion for adjournment, because of the remark that had just fallen from the honourable member for Wellington City, and he desired to say that the source from which he got his information was a person who, he believed, had never come into contact with Sir Robert Stout in his life.

Mr. DUTHIE said he was president of one of the newly-established clubs in Wellington. He did not know whether the question applied to that institution, but, if so, it was a most unwarranted charge to put on the Order Paper. There was not the slightest colour for it in anything that had taken place in that club; and he did not think the honourable gentleman was justified in putting such a question on the Order Paper without specifying the club to which he referred. It was a libel against all such institutions—with no warrant; in fact, it was due only to malicious jealousy.

Mr. McLEAN said there could be no doubt as to which club was referred to. There were two newly-established clubs in Wellington, and he thought, without some explanation, honourable members might come to the conclusion that it was the Working-men's Club. He belonged to the Working-men's Club, and he would say that he had never seen any gambling, nor had he ever seen any card-playing, in the club. He was not going to say whether he was a frequenter of that club or not. He simply said, for one of the newly-established clubs in Wellington, that he had never seen any gambling in that club.

Dr. NEWMAN said the Working-men's Club was not a newly-established club, for he had been an honorary member of it for thirteen years; so that the question must apply to another club. A lot of gambling had gone on in the club referred to some time ago. The committee were called together, and they took a high hand and passed most stringent rules that no more gambling should be allowed, and one member was expelled from the club for transgressing in that respect. It was a credit to the club that it had put its foot down in that way, and it was not fair that an honourable gentleman should get up in the House and accuse it of a crime from which it had cleared itself.

Mr. SEDDON would ask whether there was not a wider question involved, in the bringing-up of a question of this kind in regard to what was practically a private house. He thought it was a new departure, and he hoped it was the first and last occurrence they would have of the kind. From information he had received, there was no doubt it was the Junior Club to which this question referred. It would

Mr. Ward

have been much better not to have referred to the whole of the clubs. It could not have been the Working-men's Club, for that had been twenty years in existence. He did not think this question applied to it at all. He knew that, so far as the management of that club was concerned, they would not allow gambling under any consideration. What he wished to call attention to was this: that, if they allowed questions of this kind to come on the Order Paper, they might grow into proportions that they would not like. He did not think the question ought to have appeared on the Order Paper.

Mr. SPEAKER said the Speaker was responsible for what appeared on the Order Paper, and there was an apparent implication of blame for allowing the question to appear. He was bound to say that, in view of the proposals before the Legislature, to place all clubs under the control of a public Act of Parliament, it appeared to him that this question was quite in order.

Mr. SEDDON said he never questioned Mr. Speaker's action in the matter. It was a question of what the honourable member took upon himself—to ask him to make inquiries concerning institutions which at the present time were the same as private houses.

Mr. EARNSHAW said his remarks would apply to any club in Wellington. There was a general assertion. It had been generally stated that he was prompted by some person who felt injured to put this question. His information came entirely from a person who was almost unknown to members of that House.

Mr. WILLIS said this was not merely a slur on Wellington clubs, but on the clubs throughout New Zealand. The statement was, "and also other clubs in the colony." He would speak on behalf of the clubs in Wanganui. He was a member of one of those clubs, and he had made it his business to visit them, and he would say this: that these clubs were well managed; and that a general charge of this character, against the whole of the clubs in New Zealand, was not a fair charge to make, because it followed with the assertion—"to the injury of the young men of New Zealand." Therefore, if charges of this character were to be made against all clubs throughout New Zealand, the least the honourable member could have done, in making these charges, was to state some clubs, at any rate, in which these transactions took place.

Mr. EARNSHAW said he could do it *seriatim*.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said it seemed to him that the true bearing of this question had not been noticed by the House, and it could be stated in a single sentence. It was this: that the system of espionage of clubs or private houses which would result from such questions as this taking a hold upon the public was a great deal worse than gambling itself, and he thought the House was doing well in not encouraging anything of the kind.

Mr. O'CONOR would like to say, with regard to the remarks that had just been made, that he thought it was a well known fact in some parts of the country that families had been ruined by this gambling in clubs. He knew that in his provincial district two respectable families had been dragged down to the lowest through gambling. He knew one public official who ruined himself and his family, and a great many others, by gambling in these clubs. It was a pure sham to say these were private houses. They were houses allowed to sell liquor, and to carry on the business of publicans, with this addition: that they were allowed to carry on gambling or anything else. It was a public scandal, no matter what honourable gentlemen might say. It was very well known to every one that gambling was carried on in these clubs. They prohibited gambling in publichouses; and why allow it to be carried on in these places? If gambling was carried on in publichouses or private houses the police could put a stop to it; and why should they not have the same power with regard to clubs? Was it because a few wealthy people united and proposed to sell liquor, under false pretences, to everybody that frequented the clubs or was introduced by a friend? Was it for that reason these clubs should be protected? No. He gave great credit to the Government for introducing supervision in the Bill which was now passing through Committee, and he hoped when that supervision was exercised it would lead to the most stringent measures being taken to prevent practices which he knew had been carried on in these establishments.

Mr. FERGUS said the honourable gentleman stated that a considerable amount of gambling was carried on in clubs, and, of course, he brought in the rich and wealthy in connection with them. He forgot, at the same time, that there were other clubs in existence—poor men's and working-men's clubs.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Hear, hear; it is going on there.

Mr. FERGUS said, honourable members, when speaking of clubs, were disposed to adopt the same kind of argument as that used by a certain section of the community with regard to nunneries—that section of the community who characterized nunneries as places of gross immorality, and wished them to be placed under the supervision of the police. They knew nothing of them or of the way in which they were conducted, and their charges were only the creations of their own diseased brains. He had had considerable experience of club-life, and he must say that he had seen very much less gambling in clubs than he had been forced to witness at publichouses he was compelled to stay at from time to time. The honourable gentleman was quite in error in saying that gambling did not take place in publichouses, and, for that matter, in private houses. They might take his word for it, that people who wished to gamble would not go into clubs to do it, where they could be talked about. If they wanted to go in for real downright steady gambling they would get a room

in a friend's house, where they could do it in secret, and where the police could not touch them. That was where the ruin was worked. Young men in public or private situations were too well aware that if they gambled in clubs they would be talked about, and by-and-by it would come to the ears of their employers, and dismissal would follow. Where the principal gambling took place was in the back rooms of obscure publichouses, and in private houses. No committee of any well-organized club would for a single moment permit gambling to go on. It was quite true he did himself very often indulge in a game of whist for shilling points; and, if the honourable member for the Buller thought himself a dab at whist, he (Mr. Fergus) should be very glad to accommodate him.

Mr. O'CONOR said he knew better than run the risk.

Mr. FERGUS said that, after all, it was a great pity that such a sweeping condemnation should be made of the clubs of the colony. Gambling was permitted all over the colony, but he utterly denied that more gambling took place in clubs than in publichouses and private houses. Sometimes when he felt inclined for a game at a club it was with the greatest difficulty that he could get a game at whist, and in some clubs he could not get a game of whist at all. A very respected friend of his, and of the Speaker's too, used to sit down and play double-dummy for shilling points, and he was very glad of the recreation whenever the requisite number of players could not be obtained. He denied that any such thing as gambling to the extent insinuated took place in the clubs of the colony, and especially in the rich men's clubs, which had been referred to by the honourable member for the Buller. There was far more gambling carried on in that honourable gentleman's little district on the West Coast than in the clubs, and there was no club there, as far as he was aware.

Mr. FISHER complimented the honourable member for the Buller. The old homily on gambling would remain fresh and green to the end of humanity. Theodore Hook, in one of his humorous papers, used to point out rows of houses and bishops' palaces that had been won and lost by gambling. He wanted to offer one word of congratulation to the Premier on account of what had fallen from that honourable gentleman to the effect that the club was to all intents and purposes the private house of the gentlemen assembled there. He thought this question ought not to have been allowed to appear on the Order Paper. He would call attention to the skilful manner in which the question was drawn, and its extreme particularity. Why limit the gambling to five days in the week? The honourable gentleman did give them credit for two days' rest? And then, there was the sweeping assertion about all the clubs. He might say, in regard to the Junior Club, as it had been mentioned in the discussion, that this was an unmanly and dishonourable stab at a club which was undeserving of such a stab.

Mr. Fergus

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not make such an accusation against the honourable member.

Mr. FISHER said it was not on the part of the honourable gentleman. He was referring, in the use of these words, to the person who furnished the information out of pure spite. Now, in regard to the Wellington Workingmen's Club, he had been a member of that club for nearly twenty years. There were times, when the House was not sitting, when he visited that club daily, and he would say with the most perfect truth that he never saw stakes to the amount of one shilling gambled for in that club.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Has he bought buttons there?

Mr. FISHER said the honourable gentleman appeared to be possessed of an amount of information which seemed to be peculiar to himself, and was not possessed by any other honourable members. The honourable gentleman asked, "Has he bought buttons there?"

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I have been at that game myself in my lifetime.

Mr. FISHER thought the Premier was very much to be complimented for the words he made use of in regard to these clubs, and he thanked the House for the view it had adopted in regard to the language used concerning the club that had been mentioned, and the skilfully-veiled language employed to carry off the thing; but it appeared that everybody knew what club the question was directed against. He trusted no more questions of the kind would appear on the Order Paper of that House.

GOVERNMENT LEGAL BUSINESS.

Mr. DUTHIE asked the Government, When the return ordered by the House on the 5th July, as to the cost of legal business transacted for the Government, will be laid on the table?

Mr. SEDDON replied, on Tuesday next.

BONUS TO IRON INDUSTRY.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked the Government, —(1.) If they will explain what results the colony has received for the payment of £300 of the £500 bonus placed upon the estimates in regard to the iron industry, and if the lines of the Proclamation have been carried out by the persons who have received the £300? (2.) Will the Government state who received the aforesaid sum of money? He had seen notices in the *Gazette* that the bonus was to be paid for the production of five hundred tons of iron produced from the ores and iron sands of New Zealand, and he wished to know whether any scrap-iron had been used; and, if so, what was the proportion of it to that of ore and iron sand.

Mr. SEDDON said the answer of the Public Works Department was that 349 tons 13cwt. 2qr. of marketable iron had been produced. A copy of the report was attached, which he would be happy to show to the honourable gentleman. A bonus had been paid for three hundred tons only, and the money had been received by Mr. Kent, the manager of the Onehunga Ironworks Com-

pany (Limited). The operations of that company had been carried out quite openly, and they were most anxious to give every information to the public and to the officers of the department.

Mr. EARNSHAW wanted to know whether the iron produced was from ironsand and ore only, or whether scrap-iron had been used.

Mr. SEDDON said the details were in the table, which he would have great pleasure in showing the honourable member.

AUCKLAND RIFLE ASSOCIATION.

Mr. SHERA asked the Minister of Defence, Why the Auckland Rifle Association has not received any portion of the £450 which has been distributed for prizes among the rifle associations of New Zealand? He might explain that a few days ago he had asked the Minister to place a sum of £1,000 on the estimates for prizes for rifle associations, and the honourable gentleman had replied that £450 had already been voted for that object. He had put this question because he had received a letter from the secretary of the Auckland Rifle Association, Lieutenant Dormer, saying that the Auckland Association had not received a shilling.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was evidently labouring under a wrong impression. He had not informed him that the £450 had been distributed among the various rifle associations. His answer was that these associations cost the Government £450, and that was expended in supplying ammunition, in the supervision of the camp, and in other expenses incidental to the holding of the annual meeting of the Rifle Association.

CO-OPERATIVE WORKS.

Mr. WRIGHT asked the Government, When the return, ordered on the 19th July, referring to men employed on the co-operative works, will be laid before this House? It was seven weeks since this question first appeared on the Order Paper, and five weeks since the House had ordered the return.

Mr. SEDDON said the return was in course of preparation, and, as the honourable gentleman knew, there were two thousand men employed in different parts of the colony. It was impossible to have the return made in the short time mentioned, and at the same time keep up with the demands made on the Government by the House and by Committees.

ORDER PAPER.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked the Government, If they will take steps for members to receive corrected copies of the Order Paper earlier than is the custom at present? He could assure Ministers that he had no desire to embarrass them in putting this question, but he thought it was only right that members of the House should know as early as possible what business was coming on. He would suggest to the Premier that a written copy of the Order Paper might be put up over one of the mantelpieces in the lobby, and then members could see

it long before the Printing Office could supply copies. It appeared to him that there was a loss of an hour or an hour and a half of time every day in consequence of members not knowing what business was coming on.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government were following the usual practice in this respect. He had been much longer in the House than the honourable gentleman, and he had never known anything different done. When Ministers had to attend Committees, as they must do, they could only steal a few minutes after the Committees had ceased sitting to meet in Cabinet and determine what business should be brought on. That was what had happened to him that day, and it was not at all uncommon for Ministers to have to go without their luncheon. That was the punishment put on Ministers; but he might say that they arranged the business as soon as they possibly could.

AMOUNTS PAID TO MEMBERS.

Mr. MOORE asked the Government, When the return ordered by the House on the 21st July, being continuation of B.-28, 1892, will be laid before this House? This question was something like the question put by the honourable member for Ashburton, and he supposed he would receive a similar answer. He might say that when honourable members asked for returns they wished to get them during the session, so that they might use them; and he hoped they would get the returns that were ordered.

Mr. WARD said the honourable gentleman was entirely wrong if he supposed that one department furnished a return of this sort. The various departments had been instructed to make up the details, so that the final return could be made out, and as soon as those details were received the return would be placed on the table of the House.

MANAWATU RAILWAY COMPANY.

Mr. McLEAN asked the Government, If they will endeavour to get the Railway Commissioners to make suitable arrangements with the Manawatu Railway Company to enable them to run their passenger-trains to and from the Te Aro end of the city?

Mr. SEDDON said this was a matter which rested entirely with the Railway Commissioners, and was not one in which he ought to be called on to interfere.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

Dr. NEWMAN asked the Premier, If, in accordance with suggestions made by some friendly societies, he will appoint a Select Committee or a Royal Commission to inquire into the financial condition of these societies, and to report thereon? He had been asked to put this question on the Order Paper because some people were very anxious that a Royal Commission, or a Select Committee, should be appointed to inquire into the matter; and he thought a great deal of good might result from such inquiry, inasmuch as it might lead to

these societies being put on a better financial footing. He hoped to receive a satisfactory reply.

Mr. SEDDON said this was no doubt a most important question, and one that deserved having every attention paid to it. He did not know whether a Royal Commission was necessary, but he might say that the Government had very full information from the returns, and he did not think they would be warranted in going into the expense of a Royal Commission. The Government would look into the matter, and, if necessary, deal with it next session.

CODLIN-MOTH.

Mr. PALMER asked the Minister of Lands, Will the Government offer a bonus for the best means for the eradication of the codlin-moth? He might say that there were many people who had devised specifics for the eradication of this codlin-moth, and it would be of great value if something could be done to make practical use of some of them.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government would look into the matter during the recess and obtain all the information they could as to whether it would be advisable to offer a bonus for this purpose, and, if so, the Government would provide a vote.

IMPERIAL-GUARANTEED DEBENTURES.

Mr. RICHARDSON asked the Colonial Treasurer, How comes it that in Parliamentary Paper B.-10, 1893, giving particulars of securities held in the colony on behalf of the Government, on page 2, under the heading "Post Office," it is certified that debentures under "The Immigration and Public Works Act, 1870" (Imperial-guaranteed), to the value of £324,000, were in the safe belonging to the Post Office on the 8th March, 1893, while the House has been informed that such debentures were in London?

Mr. WARD replied that the information he had given to the House was correct. On applying, however, to the custodians of the securities, he found that in the return they furnished they had, by mistake, included £324,000 in the return of securities said to be held in the colony. Those securities were held in London, to the order of the Post Office, as he had informed the House. He would lay an amended return on the table.

Paper laid on the table.

LOCAL TAX ON UNIMPROVED LAND.

Mr. PALMER asked the Colonial Treasurer, As a private member cannot introduce into the Rating Act Amendment Bill a new clause allowing local bodies, if they wish, to impose on absentees from this colony a 10-per-cent. additional tax on the unimproved value of all land not under cultivation, will he take this into his consideration, with a view of introducing a clause to the above effect? He had put this question on the Order Paper for one particular reason, which was, that he had communications from the Borough Councils in his

district, in which they pointed out the hardship which arose from the settlers having to pay heavy rates, while persons who owned property there to a large extent, and who were absentees, were altogether free from those rates. These persons did not even keep any man on their property to look after it, and the consequence was that all sorts of noxious weeds grew on the land and spread to the neighbouring lands, to the great injury of them. All they wished was that they should have a right to tax those lands for local purposes to a greater extent than they had at present.

Mr. WARD was sorry to say that he was unable to comply with the request of the honourable gentleman. At present the Government were of opinion that the tax on absentees should be allowed to operate under the general land-tax only, and that it should have no application to local governing bodies.

ELECTORAL DISTRICTS.

Mr. C. H. MILLS asked the Premier, If the Government will take steps during the recess to prepare an amendment to "The Representation Act, 1887," so that more satisfaction will be given to the various constituencies than the present method of allocating the new boundaries of electoral districts now affords? It was within the knowledge of honourable members that the Commissioners had not given unmixed satisfaction—far from it. The Act provided that due consideration should be given to community of interests, facilities of communication, *et cetera*. These considerations, however, he might say, had been almost altogether conspicuous by their absence. He thought some amendment should be brought forward, in any future alteration of the law, which would provide for the matters he had referred to being attended to.

Mr. SEDDON said there was a Bill now on the Order Paper which would, he thought, rectify what had been complained of, and he hoped, if there was time, to get it through this session.

CRIMINAL CODE BILL.

Mr. C. H. MILLS asked the Premier, If the Government intend to pass the Criminal Code Bill this session? In this measure there was provision for a Court of Criminal Appeal, and it was very desirable that such a reform should be made in our law. As he had given his principal reasons the other day in favour of a Court of Criminal Appeal, he would not go into the question at present. He trusted honourable members would read the evidence he then alluded to, and they would then see the necessity for what he asked.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had brought down and passed through another branch of the Legislature the Criminal Code Bill, and he thought it very desirable that that Bill should be passed and become law. He thought it was only by codifying our laws, making the needful alterations as they were passing the Bill through, that they would ever be able to place the criminal law of the colony

fairly before the country, and so that the people could understand it. He hoped the House would see its way clear to pass that Bill.

DETECTIVES.

Mr. PALMER asked the Defence Minister, If the Government intend to appoint the two first-class detectives, in accordance with the recommendations contained in the police report of the Under-Secretary, which report was laid on the table of the House last year?

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had only provided for two first-class detectives in the estimates. He admitted that the detective force was somewhat weak, but they had one or two constables now who were doing duty as detectives. It was his intention, later on, to strengthen the detective force.

LABOUR DEPARTMENT.

On the motion of Mr. DUTHIE, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House, showing—(1) The number of those included in the 2,518 persons reported by the Department of Labour as sent to private employment, but for whom no positive engagement was really made, the nature of the engagement made on behalf of these persons, or the conditions under which they were sent which entitled the department to report that they had been sent to private employment; (2) the number of persons assisted in each of the years ending the 31st March, 1892 and 1893, by an advance of fare or other expenses on going up country in search of employment, and the average amount of such advance; and (3) the number of registered factories and hands employed thereat in each of above years: the return to show the new factories commencing work during the latter year distinguished from factories working but which had not been registered in the previous year, also in both cases the number of persons employed.

N. FRYDAY.

On the motion of Mr. HAMLIN, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a copy of the evidence taken before the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the charges made against Mr. N. Fryday, together with their report thereon.

MINES STATEMENT AND REPORT.

On the motion of Mr. NEWMAN, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the total cost, including printing and lithographing, &c., of producing the edition of the Mines Statement and of the Goldfields and Mining Report of New Zealand, 1893.

NAPIER-TAUPO, ETC., ROADS.

On the motion of Sir R. STOUT, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House a return showing the amount expended on the following roads: Napier-Taupo, Springfield-Hokitika, Nelson-Reefton, in the period from 31st March, 1892, to 30th June, 1893, specifying the amounts spent on each road on day-labour and on co-operative contracts.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. E. M. SMITH intended to exercise his privilege of moving the adjournment of the House. He would only occupy the attention of the House for a short time; but a very great and important national question was concerned, and an unfair advantage had been taken, earlier in the afternoon, of a report that had been made, and the reply of the Minister had not put the matter very clearly: in fact, if the statement made went forth uncontradicted it would make it appear that one of the greatest scandals had been perpetrated by a private company and the Government conjointly. What were the facts of the case? The Onehunga Company, about twelve months ago, decided that they would have a fair, honest, and unqualified test of the iron-ores and ironsand of New Zealand, with the view of seeing whether these great deposits could not be turned to national purposes, and they procured the very best skilled labour in the colony and in the adjoining colonies for the purpose. They had a staff of workmen unsurpassed by any in the Southern Hemisphere—men trained in England, Scotland, Wales, and America—men quite capable of working up iron and steel in every stage and by every known modern process. The Bank of New Zealand—which, he believed, was a part and portion of the Onehunga Company—had found the money, and they gave him a fair and impartial trial. They found the men, machinery, and money. The material was obtained from New Plymouth. He could say, without fear of contradiction, that at the trial, when his patent compound was put through the furnace, no scrap-iron or inferior material was used as a flux either conjointly or separately. There was only used the pure ironsand of New Zealand. What was the result of that trial smelting? The report showed that nearly fifty tons of iron had been produced, and castings were made direct from the furnace, at one operation. They could manufacture castings ready for the market more cheaply than the importers could import iron and work it up.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why do they not do it?

Mr. E. M. SMITH would tell the honourable gentleman. They manufactured tubs, buckets, horseshoes, *et cetera*, and he exhibited specimens of these in the lobby last year, so that honourable members might see for themselves what could be done in New Zealand. He had heard a leading member of the House make the remark in the lobby that scrap-iron had been used. He took another honourable gentleman to the Lion Foundry, to Luke and Sons, and to the Government workshops, and the iron was tested. The tests showed that the iron was first-class, and was equal to the best Russian or Swedish iron. He was very glad of this opportunity to again draw the attention of the House to the importance of these enormous and valuable deposits, which, if properly worked, would find employment for five thousand men, and keep £200,000 in this colony every year. We should then be able to make our own locomotives. He saw it stated that a

locomotive had been made at the Christchurch workshops; but that was all made out of imported material. If he had the Onehunga works on the beach at New Plymouth or Mokau he would be able to make, out of the *bonâ fide* products of the country, our own locomotives, carriages, trucks, and rails 25 per cent. better and 25 per cent. cheaper than the articles we were receiving from Home and abroad, even though the Minister for Public Works stated that he had imported steel rails at as low a rate as £4 a ton. He had devoted twenty-six years of his life to this question. It had been suggested that other iron had been mixed with what had been produced locally. They did not want any mixture—they only wanted the New Zealand material. To introduce other iron was only contaminating our superior class of iron. With our enormous deposits of iron-ore and coal, it was a crying shame that we should be going on as we were. He wanted again to tell this country that he had been trying to force this question upon the country for the last twenty years. He had told the country that he had done as much as any man on God's earth could do. He had sold his freehold property, and thrown up two Government situations in Wellington; and the man occupying the position he had held was now entitled to a pension for life. He had thrown up that in order that he might throw his knowledge, experience, and practice, and science into this great question. What could be done had been shown in the samples exhibited in the lobby of the House. He would ask the Government to appoint officers to report whether or not the articles exhibited had or had not been made without any mixture. He would do this because of the insinuations which had been made. He appealed to the House. He had made a practical success of the thing, and he wanted to make it a commercial success. He believed he could make it a commercial success if he had the perfect machinery and modern appliances at his command; and how was he to get it? He was going to where the greatest experts in the world were—England. He was going to take the samples now in the lobby, together with samples of our coal and timber, and so forth, and say to the scientific world, "There are the New Zealand products; there is what we can do in New Zealand; all I want is some of your money." The report of the Committee was coming before the House shortly, and he hoped he would have a majority of the House with him on that occasion, and that they would insist on a colonist of thirty years' standing, and who had stood up for the colony, and did all he could for it, being treated properly. The trials of the great inventors of this world sank into insignificance compared with the trials he had had. He did not say that from egotism at all. He had left himself and his family poor because he had spent his all in his endeavour to develop the resources of the colony. If Sir Julius Vogel had kept faith with him smelting-works and factories would have been established before this, and

Mr. E. M. Smith

we should have been able to manufacture our own rolling-stock, *et cetera*, instead of employing men in Germany, as we did at the present moment. He was very glad the honourable member had asked the question, because it was only fair for us to pay bonuses on what were *bonâ fide* products of the colony. He could positively assure them that, if his iron was submitted to practical and scientific test, it would prove to be equal to the best Swedish, and fit for all the better class of engineering and blacksmithing. It could be done without putting in ironstone or even superior stone, and iron of a high class would be produced from it. He was present at the works when the test was made, and, in order to give the affair the fullest scope, Mr. Holmes said to him, "Now, Mr. Smith, we have handed you over the machinery, and have found the money; there is everything at your command; let us have a fair trial." So satisfied was he (Mr. Smith) that things would turn out as he anticipated that he never put an apron on, but went about with his white waistcoat on and his belltopper. He gave the men every scope, and a full and free field; and that was the result: fifty tons of splendid iron, unequalled in the world for quality. It had been submitted to the best scientific men in England, and it had been worked up by the greatest steel-manufacturers there. And what did they say as to the manner in which the metal had gone through their trials? They said it was unsurpassed by any in the world. The only reason why the thing was not taken up and properly supported here was that the members of the New Zealand Parliament were not practical enough to grasp these facts; otherwise the industry would have been developed long ago. Let them, then, make up for the apathy of the past. Let them consider the matter when the report of the Committee came up. Just vote him a sufficient sum of money, and they could depend upon success being achieved, and a company with a capital of £3,000,000 started.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE would like to know how much of the public money the honourable member for New Plymouth really wished to have voted for his particular district. The honourable gentleman had already received £5,500 for throwing this ironsand out of the harbour of New Plymouth. He had also received money for roads in his district; and his district had, in addition, received, for a considerable number of years past, a large percentage from the territorial land revenue of the Provincial District of Taranaki. And yet he expected them to vote untold thousands for the purpose of experimenting with this iron-ore! He said that he had left his family poor by reason of the money he had expended in the development of this industry; but, at any rate, the brilliancy of his attire would put to shame other gentlemen in the House. The iron-ore of the colony appeared to have received due consideration at the hands of the Government, and, if the enterprise of the honourable gentleman, together with what the

Government was doing, was not equal to bringing his experiments to a successful conclusion, no further bonus from the Government would enable that end to be achieved.

Mr. EARNSHAW had had no idea of putting a red rag before the bull on the occasion when he put his notice on the Order Paper. He put it there because he thought it was a very serious question with regard to the number of bonuses granted in the past for the promotion of colonial industries. Now, he ventured to say that the Government had paid £300 for only tinpot experiments in ironworks, and had spent a sum of money which had been of no use in the direction of furthering the development of the iron industry of New Zealand. Had this money been paid upon compliance with the conditions set forth in the *Gazette* notice? He maintained that the return showed distinctly that such had not been the case. Now, the *Gazette* notice about this bonus for the manufacture of pig-iron from ironsand and iron-ore said this:—

“1. The bonus must be claimed before the 31st March, 1893.

“The bonus will be payable in instalments of £50 as each lot of fifty tons of iron is manufactured, on the certificate of an officer appointed by the Minister of Mines that the iron is of good marketable quality.

“3. In the event of more than one person manufacturing the required quality of pig-iron before the date named, inquiry will be made by the officer above referred to, when, if it is found that each applicant is equally entitled to a bonus, the amount will be divided; but in no case shall the total amount of money paid by way of bonus exceed £500.

“4. The iron in respect of which any bonus is claimed, and the ironsand or ore from which it is manufactured, will be examined by the officer aforesaid, who may require proof that not only the ore, but that the lime, coal, and any other material used in the manufacture, is of genuine New Zealand production, and that sales of pig-iron have been made at fair market prices.”

They had no information before them that that part of the *Gazette* notice had been complied with. He took leave to say that, if they were going to give bonuses for the development of any industries,—a system which was pernicious in the extreme,—it should only be done when there had been a deliberate attempt made on commercial lines to develop a particular industry. Now, with regard to the production of this iron at Onehunga, he held that it had not been done with the desire of going in for the production of this iron as a national industry at all. The works had been to a large extent employed in working up the scrap-iron of the colony. That had been the particular work of that company. They all knew the way in which the honourable gentleman sometimes talked on this question upon the floor of the House, and one in listening to him almost regretted that he had not a better knowledge of the question. He might point out that, according to this paper that

the Premier had shown him, a material used at these works was “Kamo scrap.” Now, what was Kamo scrap?

Mr. SEDDON said it was scrap-iron ore.

Mr. EARNSHAW asked, where from?

Mr. SEDDON said, from Kamo.

Mr. EARNSHAW said that was where the whole thing hinged. This *Gazette* notice was distinct and imperative. The iron was to be produced solely from the titanic ironsand or iron-ore of New Zealand, and not merely iron produced from scraps gathered from all parts of New Zealand; and he said, therefore, that in this respect the *Gazette* notice had not been complied with. The bank which owned this company at Onehunga had undoubtedly pocketed this £300, and the operations there were simply a temporary attempt to raise 300 tons of iron from scraps gathered from any source whatever. Now, so far from grappling with a national problem in the development of their iron-ores, the country had paid away £300 without gaining any results whatever from the expenditure.

Mr. DUTHIE indorsed what the honourable member had just said. He was satisfied that this £300 had been paid away without attaining any result whatever, and without compliance with the conditions. They all listened with great pleasure to the eloquence of the honourable member for New Plymouth, who painted a good picture, but without practical result. Now, he might say that he offered last session to take from the honourable member 500 tons of the class of manufactured iron for which they had the appliances at Onehunga. He offered to give the import cost price, including the duty of £2 a ton. That was a very fair start for the honourable gentleman. Yet he now reproached members of the House with not assisting him in his enterprise. There was an offer open to him, and he (Mr. Duthie) might say that he was prepared to renew that offer if the honourable gentleman would go to work in earnest, and leave off talking.

Mr. ALLEN said it was quite evident, from the written reply which the Minister gave to the question, that further investigation would have to take place into the matter. As far as one could gather from that written report, the bonus was to be given for iron manufactured from the iron-ores of New Zealand. As regarded the cast-iron and the Kamo scrap used in the manufacture of this iron, it was not clearly understood whether this cast-iron and scrap was from New Zealand ores, and therefore they were not in a position to say that this bonus had been paid away in a legitimate manner. What was the cast-iron? Was it cast-iron manufactured in New Zealand? What was Kamo scrap? The Minister said it was scrap-ore. They did not know such a thing as scrap-ore. If it were scrap made out of Kamo ore, no doubt the manufacture was legitimate. Where was the cast-iron made? Was it from Kamo or Parapara ore? The honourable member for New Plymouth, whose energy and enterprise in this direction they all admired, and whose enthusiasm the House no

doubt admired also, was, in his (Mr. Allen's) opinion, directing his energies in one groove, which really was not for the benefit of iron-production in New Zealand. He had got hold of the idea that the ironsand of New Plymouth was the only material they had available for the production of iron. All the energy he spent in that direction was more or less useless. If he would devote his energies and abilities to the solution of the question of producing iron and steel from some other iron-ore than the ironsand to be found at New Plymouth, he thought the honourable gentleman would be acting more sensibly than he was at the present time. There were other ores in the colony than the Taranaki ironsand, such, for instance, as Parapara ore and Kamo ore; and he ventured to say these were ores that, in the near future, were much more likely to be used for the production of iron and steel than was the ironsand. He felt quite sure of this: that they had in other parts of the colony appliances and material for producing iron and steel that would be many times more successful than any iron which could be produced from the titanic ironsand.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the honourable gentleman knew nothing about it.

Mr. ALLEN was merely expressing his opinion. The honourable gentleman's energies were being wasted in the particular direction to which he was applying them. He (Mr. Allen) thought the £300 which the Government had spent would have been much better spent in attempting to show that steel could be produced as a marketable commodity. The iron upon which the bonus had been paid was not a marketable commodity, and he did not know whether castings could be made, as the honourable gentleman so frequently asserted. However, as the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) pointed out, an opportunity had been given the honourable member to practically test the matter.

Mr. BRUCE regretted very much that he did not possess the advantage of a practical acquaintance with this matter, and he felt at a very great disadvantage in following the honourable member for New Plymouth in consequence of the rhetorical altitude that he had reached. They had heard a great deal that afternoon from honourable members whom they regarded as experts, as, for instance, the honourable member for Bruce and the honourable member for the Peninsula. But, at the same time, he (Mr. Bruce) did not feel that the crux of the question had been touched that afternoon. They had heard from the honourable member for New Plymouth that there were vast quantities of ironsand in his district, merely awaiting the inflow of capital and labour for the development of this particular industry. That was the position the honourable gentleman assumed. As he said, this was in reality the crux of the question, and it was, in his opinion, strong *prima facie* evidence against the possibility of making this a payable commercial enterprise. If this gave any real promise of becoming a payable indus-

Mr. Allen

try, capital would flow in for its development, in consequence of the fact mentioned in that wonderful Financial Statement of last year that "Nature abhors a vacuum." If there was any industry, no matter in what remote region of the earth, which was likely to prove payable, capital would flow in, and so it would be in the case of the development of the Taranaki ironsand. He did not like to speak in such a way as to damp the enthusiasm of the honourable member—they well knew his energy; and he only wished that he might be able to make a permanent success of this industry to which he had devoted himself. But he (Mr. Bruce) did not think that he would do so, because, as he had said, if these great treasures were there, only awaiting capital to turn them to account, capital would have flowed in that direction long ago.

Mr. O'CONOR said it appeared to him to be very absurd of the House to dispute the payment of this money. It had been paid, and had proved to be a very beneficial investment for the colony. It had established the fact that there were iron-ores in the colony which could be worked at a commercial profit. The report did not refer to Taranaki iron-ore, however, but to the Parapara ore. It was superior to any in the colony for the purpose of working up into iron or steel, and he thought the investment was an excellent one on the part of the Government, to bring out such results as that.

Mr. FISHER said he sympathized with the Premier in regretting that the time of the House should be taken up in an inopportune debate on what he might call a very important question—so important that he seriously hoped it would come up for discussion again on some future opportunity, when the honourable member for New Plymouth would have a full and fair opportunity of giving the House the advantage of all the experience and knowledge he undoubtedly possessed on this question. The Premier had been good enough to place the House in possession of a very valuable return in connection with this matter, but there were one or two simple points in regard to which he would like some information. The *Gazette* notice, which offered a bonus of £1 per ton for 500 tons of pig-iron, was as follows:—

"Notice is hereby given that a bonus of £1 per ton will be paid on the production of the first 500 tons of pig-iron of marketable quality manufactured in the colony after this date from magnetic or titaniferous ironsand or iron-ore, all material, fuel, and fluxes being the produce of New Zealand, on the following conditions, that is to say:—

"1. The bonus must be claimed before the 31st March, 1893.

"2. The bonus will be payable in instalments of £50 as each lot of 50 tons of iron is manufactured, on the certificate of an officer appointed by the Minister of Mines that the iron is of good marketable quality.

"3. In the event of more than one person manufacturing the required quality of pig-iron before the date named, inquiry will be made by

the officer above referred to, when, if it is found that each applicant is equally entitled to a bonus, the amount will be divided; but in no case shall the total amount of money paid by way of bonus exceed £500.

"4. The iron in respect of which any bonus is claimed and the ironsand or ore from which it is manufactured will be examined by the officer aforesaid, who may require proof that not only the ore, but that the lime, coal, and any other material used in the manufacture, is of genuine New Zealand production, and that sales of pig-iron have been made at fair market prices."

There was no qualification of that as to the payment of £1 per ton for any less quantity, and the iron was to be in all respects the natural product of the country. He did not dispute one word of what the honourable member for New Plymouth had said, because he, like the honourable member for Bruce, much admired the undoubted energy and ability the honourable gentleman threw into this question; and whenever the honourable gentleman spoke—whatever knowledge he might possess on other subjects—whenever he spoke on the production of iron from ironsand he (Mr. Fisher) paid the very greatest attention to his remarks. He was going to ask, how came it that, while any other manufacturer would have been bound in accordance with the terms of the *Gazette* notice to produce 500 tons, and not less, £300 was paid to this company for the production of 300 tons only? He did not enter into the question of how it was reduced—as to whether it was made with the natural ores of the country or very largely from scrap-iron. But there was one remark of the honourable member for the Peninsula that he did not understand, and that was as to the payment of £300 to the Bank of New Zealand. That might be due to his want of knowledge on the subject; but how came it? He did not see the Bank of New Zealand mentioned in any way in any of these documents on the question. Why was it paid to them?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Because they wanted the money.

Mr. FISHER said, so did he. He remembered the honourable member for New Plymouth was absent from his place in the House for a considerable time, superintending the production of this natural ore into pig-iron, and the House, it would be remembered, upon the honourable gentleman's own request, was good enough to make good the honourable gentleman's honorarium. He did not mention this for the purpose of making reflections, or for anything of that kind. But if this was the business of the Bank of New Zealand, he scarcely thought the honourable gentleman should have been absent from the House superintending work for the benefit of that bank. However, it was clear from the statement of the honourable member for the Peninsula that the *Gazette* notice had not been complied with, and, unless some influence of some kind had been brought to bear, it seemed quite clear that the £300 would not have been paid.

Mr. CARNCROSS wished to draw attention

to an industry that had been already established, and was now being carried on—the Burnside Ironworks. He was not there for the purpose of advertising that industry, but he would like the House to understand that there had been very great difficulties in connection with the carrying-on of that establishment. At present a number of working-men were carrying it on under a sort of co-operative system. The industry was one of vast importance to the country—the using-up of scrap iron and converting it into marketable material: in fact, it was converting waste into wealth. There was a difficulty in this respect: that the users of iron were many of them bound up with certain importing companies, which prevented them from dealing with whomever they chose, and, although they might be quite willing to give orders to this establishment, their financial relations with other firms prevented their doing so. The Railway Commissioners, however, had it in their power to assist the company very greatly if they would only give a fair share of their orders to it. But they patronised this enterprising firm to a very small extent: indeed, the amount of orders given by them to the company was so small as to be almost infinitesimal, and of very little use. He would therefore ask the Minister to use any influence he could, provided the prices were found to be correct, in assisting this industry which had been already established.

Captain RUSSELL said he had had a great deal to do with the drawing-up of the specifications for the bonus for iron, and hoped the House would not be led astray by the remarks of the last speaker. If they were to have an industry of any value in the colony it would not be the working-up of scrap iron, which was a mere pettifogging kind of industry. He was not sure that the system of bonus was right at all; but what they wanted to encourage was the manufacture of iron from New Zealand ore with New Zealand coal and lime, and, unless those were found in such proximity that they could be carried to the smelting-works for an infinitely small cost, iron could not be produced profitably to compete with the outside market, and there would be no use giving a bonus or doing anything.

Mr. CARNCROSS wished to explain that he had not said a word by way of asking for a bonus. All he said was that the company were manufacturing the material, and he asked, would the Minister, provided the price was satisfactory, let the company have a share of the public trade? He asked for no undue favours for the Burnside, but merely that they should receive a fair share of Government patronage, instead of its being nearly all accorded to importing firms.

Mr. E. M. SMITH said the honourable member for the Peninsula had said in his opening remarks that in the question the honourable gentleman put on the Order Paper he was doing something like holding a red rag to a bull. He presumed the honourable gentleman meant to compare him to a bull. He

(Mr. Smith) would remind the honourable gentleman that a bull can butt, and hard too, when he is roused by bad treatment. He was not going to fall out with the honourable gentleman for that, but he was going to show him where he was wrong. He said the people who had received the bonus never intended that this trial should be with a view of establishing a permanent industry on a permanent basis. If he only knew what he was talking about he would not make such a statement. He (Mr. Smith) might tell him that the Globo Assets Company had done it with a view of ascertaining whether it was practicable or feasible to make iron in New Zealand commercially, because, if it could not be done commercially, it was no good whatever. The result of the trial at Onehunga was that Sir Julius Vogel, who was now in London, going to the Imperial Institute, and seeing the splendid display of iron and steel that had been shown in the lobby last session with the intention of attracting the attention of capitalists, had succeeded in raising another £10,000 for carrying on the work in New Zealand. Within the last ten days an expert had arrived in the colony, brought out by the Globo Assets Company to thoroughly investigate the matter. The iron had been tested; it had been sent all over the world and tested in many workshops; and now this man was going to investigate the iron- and coal-deposits and make an exhaustive report. So much for the truth of the honourable gentleman's assertion. The honourable gentleman was returned to the House on the labour-ticket by the workmen of the colony, and he was the only member who had raised dissensions amongst the working representatives in the House, and he had not done what he ought to have done and tried to induce the Legislature to look seriously at these things as he should, but endeavoured to show that the trial was a fraud. The honourable member for Rangitikei had made some reference to the honourable member for Bruce bringing up scientific matter. He believed that the honourable gentleman had had a very good education. Then, he referred to the practical knowledge of the honourable member for the Peninsula, and if it were parliamentary he would say the honourable member had the audacity to compare their ability and knowledge with his (Mr. Smith's). Had he come to the House of Representatives to be compared with a brass-cock flier! He might tell them that he was fifty-four years of age, and had worked since he was ten years old. In the Old Country he had worked in the largest works and factories in England; and then to be compared with these men! He would tell them he had gone to Dunedin in 1871, and had delivered a lecture there to a very large audience, and the Professor who presided said he had never heard a more practical scientific lecture since he had been in the colony. He had met ironmasters and steel-manufacturers, and had communicated with some of the leading scientific men in the Old Country.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentle-

Mr. E. M. Smith

man was going beyond reasonable bounds in his reply.

Mr. E. M. SMITH just wished to reply to the remarks of the honourable gentleman who had preceded him. The honourable member for Rangitikei tried to hold these men up and compare them with him; and his comparison was odious. The honourable member for the Peninsula had just passed to him a slip on which was written, "My reply is, you know nothing about it. Your iron is no good for casting." He said he believed they could manufacture iron in the colony, and if he had works of his own, and the money himself, he would ask the Government for no assistance. The thing would stand upon its own legs. The quality of the iron manufactured by his process was better, and it could be sold at from 25 to 80 per cent. lower prices than the iron imported from the Old Country. He had shown a sample of the iron in the lobbies, and he was prepared to bring down further exhibits, and show them to the gentleman who was described as an iron-founder, and ask him if he would retract his statement. The castings were there to show that the iron he produced could be used for casting, and, more than that, the castings could be remelted and turned into steel, which could not be done with English iron. An honourable gentleman who would get up and make such statements as had been made was unworthy of being called a member of the House of Representatives, especially as he was elected as a labour member. He would not detain the House any longer. If the House did not assist him in the matter, he might have a friend who had got the money to give him the necessary assistance, and he would be able before he died to prove that the mineral industries of New Zealand could be worked commercially and profitably, and that there was sufficient wealth in them to pay off the national debt, in spite of those brass-cock fliers. If this was a specimen of a labour member, then he wished his constituents joy with him. He did them credit! He (Mr. Smith) must say, May he not be returned again!

Mr. SPEAKER said he would have to ask the honourable gentleman to withdraw that expression.

Mr. E. M. SMITH was sorry to have to do so, but he withdrew it.

Mr. SPEAKER said, in accepting the honourable gentleman's withdrawal, he would like to say that the honour and dignity of the House ought to be maintained, and honourable members must not indulge in expressions which were not worthy of the House.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked Mr. Speaker whether, since he had been a member of the House, he had not always paid due respect to every member of the House, and whether he had been reprimanded by the Speaker for making any statement which would lower the dignity of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER was perfectly willing to acknowledge that the honourable gentleman generally used decorous language; but it was

the Speaker's duty, when he heard anything improper, to point it out to the House.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

Mr. SEDDON said that, in accordance with the promise he had made to the honourable member for Ellesmere, he would now make a statement as to the order of business. It would be seen by that day's Order Paper that the Government intended to go on with the Alcoholic Liquors Bill, and they hoped then to go on with the orders of the day following; and on Monday evening he proposed to take the labour legislation. He thought, himself, it would perhaps be better if they were to group their Bills dealing with specific subjects, and so keep members' minds to the particular subject. He would, therefore, on Monday, ask the House to take up the labour Bills, and one or two other Bills that required to be read a second time. On Tuesday evening he proposed to go on with the taxation proposals which had been submitted. He thought they ought to decide definitely, because, in getting the taxation proposals through, the Government would know what the revenue received would be. Then he proposed to take the Native legislation—that was, the legislation dealing with Native matters already reported from the Native Affairs Committee. There were one or two other Bills that required to be sent to the Committee. He would ask, therefore, that these should be read a second time, and that the House then go into Committee on the other Bills. They had then the Bills dealing with justice—the Magistrates' Courts Bill, and the Supreme Court Procedure. He thought a night might be set apart for the consideration of these Bills. Then, they had the Railways Act Amendment Bill, and the Land and Mining Bills. These he hoped to get through at the end of the week. If fair progress was made next week he hoped in the following week to bring down the Public Works Statement. He hoped to be able to get through the rest of the departmental estimates during the week. Then at the beginning of the week he would bring down the Public Works Statement, and at the end of next week he would be able to say what Bills the Government would allow to stand over and what they wished the House to proceed with this session. From the present outlook he hoped that next week they would make more progress than they had been doing. He did not say that there had been any undue delay, except in the afternoons. He would ask honourable members who desired to get the work of the session brought to a close to exercise as much forbearance as possible. It was during the afternoons that time was lost. Perhaps, if good progress were made, the Government would not ask honourable members to work late, at night. He hoped at the end of next week to definitely point out when they might expect the session to be brought to a close.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Then, the Public Works Statement will come down—

Mr. SEDDON hoped, if fair progress was made with this legislation, to bring down the Public Works Statement the week after next.

Sir J. HALL asked if the Government had anything else to bring down. Bills were coming down every day.

Mr. SEDDON said that what they were bringing down were simply Bills dealing with technical matters, and not large questions.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said there was one Bill they should have in dealing with financial matters, and that was the Bill dealing with the financial arrangements as to the purchase of the Cheviot Estate. They had not had any indication of these as yet.

LAND SCRIP.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That this House doth concur in the recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee re land-scrip transactions in the Canterbury District, and that the titles to land be granted as recommended.

Mr. RICHARDSON seconded the motion.

Motion agreed to.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 19.—Clubs to be subject to all provisions of Licensing Acts.

Mr. BUCKLAND moved, That the words, "including the Parliamentary Bellamy's," be added to the clause.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 30.

Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Swan
Buick	McLean	Taipua
Carncross	Meredith	Taylor
Fish	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Newman	Thompson, T.
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Valentine
Hutchison, W.	Rhodes	Wilson.
Kelly, W.	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Saunders	Buckland
Lawry	Smith, W. C.	Reeves.
Mackenzie, M.		

NOES, 29.

Allen	Houston	Russell
Bruce	Kapa	Seddon
Cadman	Kelly, J.	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McGowan	Tanner
Duncan	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Duthie	Moore	Willis
Fergus	Parata	Wright.
Fraser	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Richardson	Blake
Hogg	Rolleston	Shera.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Earnshaw	Mills, J.
Hamlin	McKenzie, J.
Harkness	Dawson
Stout.	Mackintosh.

Majority for, 1.

Words inserted.

Mr. SHERA moved to strike out words embracing the provision that no new charter shall be issued except upon recommendation of a Licensing Committee.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 48.

Allen	Kelly, J.	Rolleston
Buchanan	Lake	Sandford
Buckland	Lawry	Saunders
Cadman	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Carncross	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Duncan	Meredith	Taipua
Duthie	Mitchelson	Tanner
Earnshaw	Moore	Taylor
Fisher	Newman	Thompson, T.
Fraser	O'Connor	Ward
Hall	Parata	Wilson
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	Wright.
Hogg	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Rhodes	Buick
Hutchison, W.	Richardson	Mills, C. H.
Kapa		

NOES, 11.

Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Willis.
Bruce	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Swan	Shera
Kelly, W.	Valentine	Thompson, R.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Harkness
Mackintosh	Stout
McKenzie, J.	Hamlin.

Majority for, 37.

Words retained.

Mr. McLEAN moved to insert words providing that no new charter shall be issued except upon application of not less than fifty persons.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 80.

Buick	Moore	Smith, E. M.
Cadman	Newman	Smith, W. C.
Carroll	O'Connor	Tanner
Hall-Jones	Parata	Taylor
Hogg	Pinkerton	Thompson, T.
Houston	Reeves	Ward
Hutchison, G.	Russell	Willis.
McGowan	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Meredith	Saunders	Duthie
Mills, C. H.	Seddon	McLean.
Mitchelson		

NOES, 27.

Allen	Kapa	Shera
Blake	Kelly, J.	Swan
Bruce	Kelly, W.	Thompson, R.
Buchanan	Lake	Valentine
Buckland	Mackenzie, T.	Wilson
Carncross	Mackenzie, M.	Wright.
Duncan	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fisher	Richardson	Fish
Fraser	Rolleston	Lawry.
Hall		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Earnshaw	Mills, J.
Harkness	Dawson
McKenzie, J.	Hamlin
Stout.	Mackintosh.

Majority for, 8.

Words inserted.

The Committee divided on the question, "That subsection (8) be retained."

AYES, 87.

Blake	Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Buchanan	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McLean	Swan
Carncross	Meredith	Tanner
Carroll	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Duncan	Moore	Thompson, R.
Fraser	O'Connor	Thompson, T.
Hall-Jones	Parata	Ward
Hogg	Pinkerton	Willis.
Houston	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kapa	Richardson	Buick
Kelly, J.	Saunders	Fish.
Lawry	Seddon	

NOES, 18.

Allen	Mitchelson	Taipua
Bruce	Newman	Valentine
Buckland	Rhodes	Wilson.
Hall	Rolleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, W.	Sandford	Russell
Lake	Shera	Wright.
Mackenzie, M.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Earnshaw	Mills, J.
Harkness	Dawson
Hutchison, W.	Duthie
McKenzie, J.	Hamlin
Stout.	Mackintosh.

Majority for, 19.

Subsection (8) retained.

The Committee divided on the question, "That clause 19, as amended, stand part of the Bill."

AYES, 42.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	Seddon
Blake	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Buchanan	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Buick	Meredith	Swan
Cadman	Mills, C. H.	Tanner
Carncross	Moore	Taylor
Carroll	O'Connor	Thompson, R.
Duncan	Parata	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Pinkerton	Ward
Hall	Reeves	Willis
Hall-Jones	Richardson	Wright.
Hogg	Rolleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Sandford	Fish
Kapa	Saunders	Lawry.
Kelly, J.		

NOES, 14.

Bruce	Mitchelson	Valentine
Buckland	Newman	Wilson.
Kelly, W.	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Shera	Fergus
Mackenzie, M.	Taipua	Russell.

PAIRS.	
<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Harkness
Earnshaw	Mills, J.
Hutchison, W.	Duthie
Mackintosh	Stout
McKenzie, J.	Hamlin.

Majority for, 28.

Clause agreed to.

Mr. WILLIS moved to add the following new clause: "In carrying out the determination at a poll taken under section twelve of this Act the Committee shall give effect to such determination after giving three years' notice to the licensees of the license which the Committee has decided to cancel."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 9.

Blake	Lawry	<i>Tellers.</i>
Bruce	Shera	Mills, C. H.
Fisher	Thompson, T.	Willis.
Kelly, W.		

NOES, 41.

Allen	Mackenzie, T.	Sandford
Buick	McGowan	Saunders
Cadman	McLean	Seddon
Carncross	Meredith	Smith, E. M.
Carroll	Mitchelson	Smith, W. C.
Earnshaw	Moore	Swan
Fraser	Newman	Taipua
Hall	O'Connor	Tanner
Hall-Jones	Parata	Taylor
Hogg	Pinkerton	Thomson, R.
Houston	Reeves	Wilson.
Kelly, J.	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Richardson	Buckland
Mackenzie, M.	Rolleston	Valentine.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Dawson	Harkness
Duthie	Hutchison, W.
Fergus	Ward
Hamlin	McKenzie, J.
Kelly, W.	Wright
Mackintosh	Stout
Mills, J.	Earnshaw.

Majority against, 32.

New clause negatived.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved the following new clause:—

"Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in 'The Government Railways Act, 1887,' no license to sell alcoholic liquors at any railway refreshment-room shall be granted except subject to the provisions of this Act, and all fees and moneys received from any such license shall be paid to the credit of the local authority entitled to receive the same under this Act."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 21.

Bruce	Carncross	Fisher
Buick	Earnshaw	Hall

Hall-Jones	Rhodes	Taylor
Hogg	Richardson	Wright.
Kelly, J.	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Moore	Saunders	Mackenzie, T.
Newman	Tanner	Wilson.
Pinkerton		

NOES, 28.

Allen	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Blake	McLean	Swan
Buckland	Meredith	Taipua
Cadman	Mitchelson	Thompson, R.
Carroll	O'Connor	Thompson, T.
Fraser	Parata	Willis.
Houston	Rolleston	
Lake	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Shera	Fish
Mackenzie, M.	Smith, E. M.	Mills, C. H.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Buchanan
Earnshaw	Mills, J.
Fergus	Ward
Hamlin	Mackenzie, J.
Harkness	Dawson
Hutchison, W.	Duthie
Kelly, W.	Russell
Stout.	Mackintosh.

Majority against, 7.

New clause negatived.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE moved the following new clause:—

"Every Returning Officer, after the day of polling at any general election where a poll for the election of a member for the General Assembly of New Zealand has been had, and before sealing up the certified copies of rolls received from the various Deputies, shall transfer from the said rolls on to a fair copy of the electoral roll of the district a distinguishing mark to indicate every voter who has voted at the said election, and shall write the word 'Candidate,' or 'Prohibited from voting,' opposite the names of such persons as were candidates or prohibited by law from voting at such election, and shall sign the said roll as accurate, with his name and the title of his office, and the date of the polling-day; and shall transmit the complete roll so marked to the Registrar of the district, who thereupon shall, for the purposes of this Act, erase from the roll of the district the names of all the voters other than candidates and persons prohibited from voting who are not indicated by the roll received from the Returning Officer as having voted at such election; and for so doing this Act shall be sufficient warrant."

"The said Registrar shall keep, and produce to the Resident Magistrate on any revision of the roll, the marked copy of the roll received from the Returning Officer; and the said roll shall be sufficient evidence that any person other than a candidate not marked thereon as having voted at an election did not vote at such election."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be read a second time."

AYES, 14.

Bruce	Lake	Sandford
Earnshaw	McLean	Wright.
Fisher	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Richardson	Allen
Hutchison, G.	Rolleston	Mackenzie, T.

NOES, 81.

Blake	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Buick	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	Mills, C. H.	Swan
Carncross	Mitchelson	Tanner
Carroll	Newman	Taylor
Fraser	Parata	Thompson, R.
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	Thompson, T.
Hogg	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Rhodes	Buckland
Kelly, J.	Saunders	Fish.
Lawry	Shera	

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Duthie	Hutchison, W.
Fergus	Ward
Hamlin	McKenzie, J.
Harkness	Dawson
Mackintosh	Stout
Russell.	Kelly, W.

Majority against, 17.

New clause negatived.

Bill reported.

The House adjourned at two o'clock a.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 28th August, 1893.

Third Reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—Conspiracy Law Amendment Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READING.

Workmen's Wages Bill.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

On the motion for the committal of this Bill, Mr. G. HUTCHISON said,—Sir, I did not take an opportunity during last session, nor at any former stage of the Bill this session, to say anything on this subject. I desire, now, to venture a word or two on this Bill, which must be one of the most important measures which will be chargeable to this Parliament, if it be passed. I will not at present go into any of the abstract considerations as to the bearings of the Bill, but I should like to point out how serious it must be in its actual operation. Taking a brief review of the machinery clauses of the Bill, the result would seem to be this: that the colony will, soon after the passing of the measure, be divided into industrial districts, and Clerks of Awards will be

appointed to these districts. And then District Boards are to be set up, consisting of not more than six or less than four persons, each chosen for three years by the industrial unions of the employers and employed, such numbers not including the Chairman of each Board, who is to be elected by the Board, or, in default, to be appointed by the Governor. It would appear that, if no complete nomination be made, —as is not improbable by, say, the employers forming no industrial union,—these Boards may be appointed by the Governor. Then, there is an ultimate Court of Arbitration, to consist of three persons to be appointed by the Governor, one of whom is to be a Judge of the Supreme Court. The two others are to be selected by the Governor—that is, the Ministry—on the recommendation of the councils of the industrial unions. This all means a new State department, and probably a variety of new appointments. Once erected, it is not to be expected that this powerful machinery will be left inoperative. Indeed, it would seem that this Bill is anxiously awaited by many of the labour organizations throughout the colony. So we may expect, whatever attitude of quiescence the employers may assume, that, at any rate, there will be active steps taken to bring this Act into operation on the part of the employed. Now let us endeavour to follow out the working of the Act. A district is proclaimed—we will suppose, the Provincial District of Wellington—the Board is set up, and also the Court, and one of the labour organizations brings a case before the Board. Let us assume that it is a case by the Bootmakers' Union. I suggest that union, because there was a dispute between the operative bootmakers of this city and their employers not very long ago. Well, the Union files an application with the Clerk, who sends it on to the Board. The Board is then in a position to deal with it. I will suppose that the employer takes no steps in the matter at all. Yet his business is within the jurisdiction of this Board, which may proceed to investigate its inmost ramifications. Although the powers of the Board in the way of inspection and of taking evidence are as large as those of the Court of Arbitration, still its powers are not very far-reaching. It, however, has the power of sending the case on to the Court of Arbitration, which has certainly very large powers in every direction. I will assume that the employer still does not appear. That, however, does not matter. His presence is unnecessary, because the Court may deal with matters *ex parte*. In due course the Court makes an award, which may direct payment of costs and give absolute directions as to the industrial dispute. As to the former part,—that is, the part that deals with the payment of money,—the limit against an association or a person, such as an employer, is £500, or, against an individual on account of his membership of a union or association, £10. As to the part of the award directing a money payment, the proceedings would be left to be dealt with in the ordinary course of judgments in the Supreme Court or Res-

dent Magistrate's Court. The other part of the award—that which may direct what is to be done with reference to the industrial dispute—the Bill provides shall be binding and may be enforced for two years. How that is to be done it is impossible to conceive. Suppose it is a direction following the application of an industrial union for an advance of, say, 5 per cent. upon the wages paid. How that is to be enforced no one, as far as I know, has been able yet to give any idea. Section 29 provides that, notwithstanding the reference of the matter to a Board or Court, there shall be no strike or lock-out except for some good cause other than a mere dispute. How can it be or may it be supposed that an employer is to submit to an award, we will say, of 5 per cent. advance for any period up to two years, which is the limit of direction that the Court may give? It is one of those unexplained powers given in this Bill which leave us only in doubt as to the evil that it may do. An employer can hardly be expected to submit for two years, or any length of time, to an award which he may consider to be injurious to the working of his business. And as to its effect upon trade generally, there can be almost no limit to the consequences which may ensue. Let it be supposed an award is made for an advance on wages as against one firm or one employer. Perhaps this firm or employer is in a large way of business, with a large turnover. It can hardly be imagined that a similar award would not be sought to be extended to others in the same line of business—on persons, it may be, who, from lack of the same capital, or from the want of the same energy or application in business, are not on a par, in the matter of profit, with the employer selected for the claim in the first instance. What would happen to the less prosperous employers, in such circumstances, is a matter for speculation only as to the extent of the ruin that the award would cause. What protection, or, rather, what refuge would be open to employers who were subjected to an adverse award, whether in the first instance or on application afterwards in succession, it would be very hard to imagine, unless it were that increased protective duties would be sought to be imposed, corresponding to the advance in wages, so as to enable those persons to keep pace with the requirements of the Court; or else—what is not improbable under the operation of such a Bill as this—the State would be expected to step in and take over these industries and carry them on under the municipalisation of industries we have had suggested in some of the more extreme councils of socialism in the Old World. Thus far, I have considered the measure as used by the employed against the employer. On the other hand, let it be supposed that the award is sought not by the employed but by the employer, who finds it impossible, with the business that he carries on, to pay the wages that he has paid up to a certain point. And suppose that the award in this particular case—for I presume each case will be judged on its own footing—is given

in favour of the employer and against the employed. The disappointment first, and the misery afterwards, in applying that award against the poor operatives would be experiences more appalling to contemplate than any under the other aspect of the dispute. The whole thing is so dangerous—so evil, I may say—in its possible consequences that we appear as if standing on the brink of an abyss. It is now a question only of the depth, and that, at present, is unfathomed. This serious change may result in something we have no idea of; a sort of industrial millennium is hoped for, but it may turn out very differently. It is scarcely probable that immediately, at any rate, any good will result from it, especially as we see around us the expectations of poor working-men, who look for guidance to others, inflamed, from reading Bills of this kind, to expect something which cannot be even approached except through the agency of violent change,—which cannot be attained except in a way that will almost necessarily commit them to serious trials; with the result, I very much fear, of dissociating more than before the interests of capital and labour, which should be brought together and reconciled rather than driven—as this Bill will drive them—into antagonistic camps.

Mr. DUTHIE.—Early in the session I quoted in the House the opinion of Mr. Burt, a member of the Gladstone Government, a man who has for long years enjoyed the confidence of the labouring-classes of Great Britain. He has been a member of the House of Commons for some twenty years. At a recent meeting at Newcastle he spoke out very emphatically against the possibility of dealing with labour disputes by compulsory arbitration, such as is proposed under this Bill. I will not quote his words again, as they are on record; but one can only deeply regret the perseverance of the Government with this measure. It can have no other effect than to further restrict enterprise in this colony. Already many people have been prevented from investing in enterprises which depend upon labour; and industry is thereby suffering: and it must suffer further by every addition to the obstacles placed in the way of the employment of capital. If our industries are languid, and employment is scarce, these conditions are largely due to that lack of confidence which is brought about by the proposal of such measures as this, and of other legislation for which the Government is responsible. The effect of this Bill must be to bring about further strife and trouble; for when employers and employed are arrayed in two organized camps, they cannot remain long in that position without its leading to a trial of strength. It means, really, that we are to have in this country a repetition of the disasters passed through only a few years ago. There is no wrong at the present time that specially needs redress, and there is no immediate need for legislation of this class. Therefore the bringing-forward of legislation which can only have the effect of setting the working-classes and their employers by the

ears is deeply to be deplored. Then, with all the care that may be bestowed upon it, even by a Judge of the Supreme Court, it is utterly impossible that any satisfactory verdict can be got without special knowledge and experience upon the involved issues in any manufacturing dispute between the employers and the employed. The only case where success in a partial degree attended these Courts of conciliation has been in connection with the iron trade in Staffordshire, but there they had the advantage of experts like Sir Rupert Kettle, who presided for a long period of years over a Board of this character. That Court has been the means of averting strikes; but there are only solitary instances, and in these cases every one concerned had an intimate knowledge of the conditions between parties, and of the points involved. If this Bill passes, and a decision is come to by the Court, it will prove to be utterly futile, since it will be impossible to enforce it. You may get Judges of the Supreme Court to act, and possibly to make an award; but when you come to enforce the decision, what can you do? If it be adverse to the men they will throw up their employment. Can you force them to go back to that employment? Are men slaves, to be driven back to work against their will? And can employers be forced to keep on their works if it is against their interest and unprofitable to do so? I say that, despite all law, they will resist the decision by closing their works. It is a pity to bring such a state of things about; yet I feel sure that the outcome of this Act will be to bring about just such results as I indicate. It is, perhaps, useless to go into the arguments as affecting these clauses of the Bill. They have been brought before the House before, and the Bill has passed the House, and, I suppose, will do so again. One can only briefly record his protest, point to the evil results that must ensue, and deplore the injury that is already done to the industries of the colony by the fact of such measures being contemplated. I do not feel called upon to make any further effort to stay the passage of the measure, and the Bill may as well pass through Committee in all its severity. We on this side of the House are helpless to stop the Ministry in their destructive course, but, having warned them, one has done his duty to those whom he represents.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not propose, any more than the last speaker, to enter upon a lengthy discussion of the Bill. I view the Bill with great apprehension. I think it is a mischievous thing, when looked at in the interests both of the employers and of the employed. I think it will throw back the industries of the country, and will prejudice the interests of those employed in these industries, more than any labour Bill which has yet been before the House. Other labour Bills carried with them their own remedy, so far as they failed of their object; but this Bill is, I think, a very mischievous one in principle. It is not merely a matter of detail; it is a matter of principle. Its effect will be to bring unions into

Mr. Duthie

a position which I think will be injurious to their interests, and I, for one, do not desire to see their interests prejudiced. I desire to see them remain, and I think, for the purposes of conciliation, they should remain, trade-unions, and that we ought not to have these unions appointed as District Boards for the purpose of dealing generally with the question of labour *versus* capital, for in doing that we shall be perpetuating strife between labour and capital. I think it is a sad thing that we should see that brought about, on the invitation of a Minister of the Crown to pass this Bill as an experiment. The honourable gentleman has told us that the Bill is purely experimental. But it will be years before the colony will recover from the consequences entailed upon it by the deviser of this experiment for dealing with questions in dispute between capital and labour. I do not wish to say one word except words of conciliation in respect of the Bill; but I appeal to the honourable gentleman, at the present time, not to let it be said that one of his first efforts in connection with the difficulties between labour and capital had the effect of perpetuating strife and doing irreparable mischief, as he assuredly will be doing if this Bill passes in its present form. I do not propose to go into the details of the Bill, more than to say that it contains many features objectionable to me, and that the effect of forcing men into these unions will be to mix these unions up with political affairs. The advanced thought at Home of those most interested in the cause of labour and of the industrial classes—the advanced thought of these men, I say, is distinctly against such a project as this. These unions have worked out their own destinies; they have done great service in the cause of the labouring-man; they have gained great advantages for labour, and have attained to a proper organization of that labour in relation to capital. But I think it will be an evil day for them when they are brought by such a Bill as this into the political arena. It will prove to be the death-knell of unionism and of the proper representation of the industrial classes in the struggle that ever will exist between them and capital. There is one particular feature of this Bill against which I enter my protest most emphatically, and that is the introduction of a Judge of the Supreme Court into these matters. We have had no reason shown us whatever for that innovation in this Bill. Last year the Judges of the Supreme Court appeared on the face of the Bill—introduced, not by the Minister, but introduced, I think, in the Labour Bills Committee; and we had before us then an emphatic protest, on the part of those best qualified to judge,—that is to say, by the Judges of the Supreme Court themselves,—against such a proposal. We have nothing now before us to show that the opinion of the Judges of the Supreme Court has been altered in that respect. If you wish to get the advantage of the position and status of a Judge of the Supreme Court in the arbitration of quarrels such as these—quarrels that, I may say, will ultimately come again to the

Supreme Court in one form or another—why cannot you give a man the status of a Judge of the Supreme Court for this purpose, without giving him the name of one? You are mixing up different tribunals, and doing a great wrong thereby to the Supreme Court—a tribunal which the people of the colony look to to keep free from the turmoil of politics, and from the ordinary strife that pervades such contests as those between labour and capital. I ask this House, as I asked it last year, what do you mean by giving the status of a Judge of the Supreme Court to men who shall preside over these Courts, and by bringing a Judge of the Supreme Court into these matters? The status of a Judge of the Supreme Court is the status of a man who holds office during good behaviour. He is independent in point of salary, and he has a character that will commend itself as good in the particular position in which he is placed. If, for the purposes of the measure before us, you will give a man stability of employment, and put him in a position where the faithful discharge of duty is the only measure of the tenure of his office, you have got all that is required. But let us hesitate before we bring the Supreme Court into an arena which does not belong to it. I object to the Railway Department being brought under the provisions of this Bill. I am not going, Sir, into the arguments for and against this Bill; they will be gone into in Committee; but I do appeal to the Minister, at the last moment, not to do what he appears determined to do—that is to say, not to force on the country Bills the outcome of which will be, I believe, disastrous to the country.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I should just like to say one or two words on this Bill. I may be said to know nothing about the measure. I am only one unfortunate man born in this colony and mixed up with labour. I look at the ability of the Minister of Labour and his great knowledge of all these matters, and, when I consider the way in which he is backed up by the four labour members of this House and the four labour members in the other House, it seems to me that he has only one wish, and that is to please these eight honourable gentlemen, and that these honourable gentlemen consider that the whole good of the colony must give way to him. I ask him to be merciful. I hope that, when, by-and-by, the execration of the workers comes down upon the heads of the people who have brought this Bill in, this honourable gentleman and the labour members will receive their fair share of it. I feel sure that that execration will fall. They are trying to set up some strange god—some idol—that we are to be called upon to fall down and worship. Like Paul at Athens, we are to see the people worshipping an unknown god that the honourable gentleman is setting over our heads. The whole of the labour legislation is in that direction, and it is doing one of the most foolish things that have ever been done in this country—setting capital against labour, and stirring up strife between them. I

am not going to open my mouth in Committee against one of these Bills. Probably I may vote, if any division is called for. I am going to put the whole of the trouble and abuse that will be the outcome of these measures on the shoulders of those who should bear it, and they are the honourable members who, in their madness and folly, are doing their best to bring on this colony the wild scare that proved so disastrous in Great Britain a few years ago; and I say that that is sure to be the result if they are foolish enough to persevere in the course which they have entered upon.

Mr. BLAKE.—I do not intend to say much about these Bills. The honourable member who last spoke said of this Bill that it was an unknown god. I say it is not an unknown god, if it is a god at all. We do know it, because it is in our midst. The necessity for such a Bill is rather apparent to most people. The question is, What is required? That seems to me to be the only question we have got to consider. I do not think it is exactly right to have honourable members on the opposite side of the House rising to say that they will take no part in dealing with such legislation as this Bill proposes. If in any respect the Bill is not right it is their place to make it as good as they can. It is a Bill that is not easily made to suit all. I think, if the honourable gentleman who has taken it in hand can succeed in making a good Bill, to suit all the necessities of the case, he will have done a wonderful work. I really do not think he is able to do it, nor any other man in the country. I am not depreciating the honourable gentleman's ability when I say that I do not believe he is able to do so, because there is probably not a man in the country who would be able to do it. We all know very well that it is a very hard thing for any man, no matter who he is, to work a factory of people and to work it to the satisfaction of himself, of the master, and of the men, no matter how unlimited his powers might be. That is only one fact. Now, the honourable gentleman in charge of this Bill has, so far as I can understand, taken in hand the work in the interests of the whole industrial class of New Zealand; and, however clever he may be, however far-sighted he may be, I very much question if, in the first attempt at any rate, he will succeed: if he does, the more honour to him. We do not expect prudence nor the best ideas from the masses as a whole. We know very well that when they meet they get rather excited, and we know they then propose things not suited to both sides of the case—that is, to employers and employed. Numbers very often excite themselves, and they carry resolutions that force the people who take their part to do things in the hurry of the moment that may not turn out, in the end, to be as profitable as may have been expected. We know very well that commerce excites to a certain extent the unity of a nation, but it divides the individuals, because, no matter what the employer may think, and no matter how he may work for the good of the trade, to carry his opinions, to make his goods as cheap as he can, we all know very

well, in these latter days, the industrial classes hold that the more an employer makes the more they must get. The master has kept himself aloof from the workman for years, and the state of unionism now is such that the more the unions increase the more the master is separated from his men; therefore the best interests of the men, from their point of view, are very often quite different from those of the employer. It was quite different years ago, when a workman was part and parcel of the trade he worked at. Then the man would fight for his master's interest, and the master and his men held union together, and would fight for their own interests in spite of all the world, because each one was interested as well as the other. But of late years it is quite different. The Government may protect individual rights; I suppose it can. Up till lately, Governments have not interfered between employers and employed in this country, and it seems to me very doubtful how they will succeed when they do interfere.

Mr. REEVES.—They have never done anything else.

Mr. BLAKE.—I do not believe in following old countries, because we live in a young country, and are in a different situation. We are here amongst ourselves to fight between ourselves, and not much for export; whereas in older countries they fight all these matters in the interest of export, because they cannot nearly consume all they make amongst themselves. Here, owing to high wages and various other things, we cannot make cheaply enough for export, therefore we have only to make for sale amongst ourselves; and I think it is a great pity that masters and men, in such a country, cannot manage to agree amongst themselves, without the Government interfering. However, I feel, if it is a necessity—I do not argue that it is a necessity; I do not regard a Conciliation Bill as really necessary—but, if it is, we must have some machinery to put it in force after it is made; otherwise it would be quite as useless as if we had not passed it. I am not here as an opponent of the Bill. I acknowledge that I do not understand the working of factory-hands. I am getting old, and have been mixed up with working-men for some fifty years: it is, I think, fifty years since I was timekeeper in the Old Country, and I have been mixed up with working-men ever since; and I do feel sure that no Bill that any Government could draft would ever have managed the men I have worked with, or had working under me—because if men are good men they will do what they are wanted to do without any Bill, and if they are bad men their master does not want them, and no Bill will make them good men. The great trouble in all Bills of this sort is, that you make the bad men equal to the good, and therefore everything in the end will fail; you bring the good men down to the level of the bad, instead of bringing the bad up to the level of the good. I can recollect, as long ago as 1846, when I was in a large shop at Southampton, we were then in the trouble that every week, or nearly

every day, people were travelling to get work, and every one employed had to dub up 2d. or 6d., according to his status in the factory, for those who were travelling looking for work and hoping not to find it. The great trouble now is the people who will not work. I think it was Burns who said the worst thing he ever saw in the world was a man looking for work. But I think it is a worse thing to see a man who does not want to find work. That is the trouble; and all the Bills you ever make will never make these men find work, because when they found it they would not do it. Now, the clauses of this Bill, it seems to me, in many cases would not be considered good by the employers. They may be so considered by some workmen, but not by all. The really good workmen will not want them at all, and as to the really bad workmen you will not make clauses to suit them. I shall not oppose the Bill, because I do not think I am able to give an opinion good enough to oppose what may be a good Bill for all I know; but I do know that the difference is whether the men are working against the masters or whether they are working with them: all depends on this. If you take it in a military sense, every man serving under his officer knows that he must do what his officer tells him, for his own good; but it is quite different when you come to the industrial classes: there the more the master makes the more the man wants to be considered. The question is, how much he is to be considered; and until that is defined I very much question if you will make a Bill to suit the case. There are many clauses in the Bill which, if I felt inclined, I could criticize, but I do not intend to do so. We well know that many men have tried to take up these measures. I think it was Carlyle who said it was no longer "arms and the man" but tools and the man. I do not think either of these is right. My opinion is that it is tools and not the man, for the simple reason that the man puts the coals into the engine and the engine works the tools. A great difference is created by the invention of machinery, and what you do to-day will not suit to-morrow, and no man can bring in a Bill this year that will suit what will be required next year, and, these Bills once begun, the necessity for them will never end. I shall not oppose the Bill, as it may be a good one, but I very much doubt if it will be found so.

Mr. FISH.—There can be no doubt that the policy contained in this Bill has been before the country now for some time; and I think it must generally be admitted that at first, at any rate, when the question was brought before Parliament by the present Government, there was apparently a somewhat strong demand that legislation of a character similar to this should be carried. However, I am free to confess, and I think it is a remark that must have been made by a large number of observing people, that there has been gradually rising in the minds of the public generally—and when I say the public I include the working-classes—a feeling that we are getting somewhat too

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much of this kind of legislation. It is one of those things which are taken up in a spasmodic way as the result of something of an abnormal nature which has occurred; and generally the result of this kind of thing is that our rulers have been urged on to legislation which reason and after-reflection have told a great number of people is mistaken and improper legislation. I am, like the last speaker, not going to oppose the Bill. At the same time, I have grave misgivings as to whether it will effect the object the honourable gentleman has in view. The honourable gentleman himself has called it more in the nature of an experiment than anything else. Well, the question we have to consider is, whether it is wise to legislate experimentally; whether we ought not to get beyond the region of experiment before we are asked to enact a law which makes a certain thing compulsory upon the country as a whole. I have considerable doubts whether this Bill will effect the object the mover of it has in view. At the same time, it may have some good effect in preventing strikes, and if we can be only assured that the result of the operation of this Bill will be that strikes will be prevented in future, then there can be little doubt all classes of the community will hail it with delight, because we must all admit that strikes of any magnitude cause evils which one cannot at the time foresee, but which we know are very shocking, more particularly to the workers themselves. In fact, it may be said, without fear of contradiction, that in nine strikes out of ten, although the capitalists are great losers, the workmen in the end get the worst of the affair. Sir, it has been said, I think, by the leader of the Opposition that he has some objection to a Supreme Court Judge being brought into connection with this Bill. Now, if it is to become law, I differ with him in that view. If we are to have a Judge at all to decide in industrial disputes we should have one of the highest Judges in the land to take that position. Then, there is another question that has been raised with regard to this Bill, and that is the compulsory clauses of it. I must confess that I fail to see what would be the good of the conciliation clauses in the Bill unless it also provided for compulsory arbitration. If we will not have that, I think it must be admitted there is no necessity for the Bill at all, because any persons in a dispute can enter into a conciliatory argument about the affair without the necessity for any legislation at all. At any rate, the result of any Court of Conciliation without compulsory arbitration would, I think, be somewhat of a sham. There is another part of the Bill to which I give my strong and unhesitating opposition, and it is that portion of it that seeks to bring railway employés under the operation of the Bill. I do not care what any person says to the contrary, but I hold that the railway employés in this colony are entirely different from the workers of the country, and that they should not have facilities offered them to make complaints, and take them outside the range of the official managers of the de-

partment, these being in the present case the Railway Commissioners, or, supposing they were abolished, the Government. They occupy, to my mind, in the army of workers something of the same position as soldiers do in an army as in contrast with other portions of the community—the civilians; and I think what might be quite good or what might be proper with regard to the workers—the private workers, so to speak—will not hold good with regard to these railway men. I feel assured in my own mind that the inclusion of the railway men in this Bill is in the first place quite unnecessary, and, secondly, I strongly believe it is only urged by certain persons who advocate it in order to gain a little cheap claptrap popularity by so urging it. I think this, and I do not hesitate to express it: that there is a strong feeling coming over the working-men in this country that they are being meddled with too much, and that they would be glad to be left alone. Things are not now as they were three years ago, and I, individually, am very thankful for it; and I believe the great mass of the workers, whilst they hail with satisfaction any legislation which will improve their social position—ameliorate the condition of things for them—do not want to be patted upon the back by the Minister of Labour, or by any other Minister. Give them certain particular improvements upon the conditions that existed before, and they are satisfied; and they are beginning, I feel assured, to see that all this so-called labour legislation is merely used as a means of assisting certain people into a position in politics which otherwise they would never achieve, and that they are being made use of for that purpose more than for their real and solid benefit. It is my opinion—and I may have erred in forming that opinion, but I do not think I have—that what I have said will prove to be a fact. I have said that I am not prepared to go to the length of opposing this Bill. It may do good; I am very fearful—I am very doubtful of it myself. At the same time, I should not like to have it said of myself that I was one who prevented the Bill having a chance or a trial. If it does not succeed in doing what is expected of it, then it will be very easy, I presume, to have the Bill repealed. The Minister himself does not go the length of saying it may achieve even the object he desires, but simply says he believes that something is wanted, and that this may be a palliative—that it may be what the people wish; and he says, I think we may fairly say, as far as I can see, that this is the best means of effecting this object, and it should have a trial. I do not think the Minister himself goes very much further than that. Speaking generally, I would strongly counsel the Government—if they wish to retain the confidence of the country—to lessen the number of their labour Bills, to lessen interference with the liberty of the subject. If they want to support the working-classes, I beg to assure them the best way to do so will be to drop this eternal interference with the liberty of the subject. I should like to say, before I sit down, that I protest very

strongly against the manner in which the Government place their business on the Order Paper. No person to-day, Sir, looking at the Order Paper, would have any idea that the legislation the House has got to deal with to-night would in all probability have been brought on to-night. I believe the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill cannot be gone on with for reasons outside the control of the Government; but, apart from that, we ought to have some indication, especially at this period of the session, as to what Bills are going to be considered on a certain night. I myself desired to make very lengthy remarks upon another Bill which will come on shortly, and I have not been able to prepare myself because I have been preparing myself for other Bills which I thought would come on; and I think the Government, at this late period of the session, ought to try to give honourable members upon their proof copy of the Order Paper a general indication of the business something more like what they mean to go on with than they do.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, I entirely disagree with the remarks made by some of the previous speakers, because I am quite satisfied of this: It is very possible, to my mind, that the conciliation part of the Bill will practically settle disputes between workmen and employers; but I say, if they cannot agree, then you must have compulsory arbitration. What is the use of arbitration unless they decide either one way or the other? If you bring the workmen and their so-called masters together it is very possible they may agree, and I believe they will, as a rule; but, supposing they cannot agree, what is the use of talking about arbitration if you cannot enforce it? To my mind that would be a pure sham, and I must congratulate the Minister of Labour on bringing in a Bill of this kind, which I am sure will meet the views of the great bulk of working-men in this colony. However, I am not going to say any more, and I should not have said what I have but for the contention from the other side, against which I protest, that compulsory arbitration should not be enforced. As one who has had to do with working-men, I say that if you call them together in a conciliatory manner, as a rule, they agree; but if they cannot agree, then, I say, it is time the Arbitration Court stepped in and enforced the decision either one way or the other.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Sir, I did not intend to say anything on this Bill to-night, because all that had to be said was said last year, and it is only the remarks of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) that brought me to my feet. He said that when the present Government came in there was a desire for this measure, and that there is now a growing feeling among the working-men against this Bill. I question whether that honourable gentleman is in as fit a position to judge whether this measure is really demanded by the working-men as those members of the House who are termed "labour members." We are in close continuous touch with the labour organizations of this country, and I say without

hesitation that there is a more determined demand upon the part of the labour organizations in New Zealand for this measure than there was when this Government came into power. The honourable gentleman now opposes the Railway Department being brought under this Bill. He says the railway men are being led by those who want to make political capital out of them. Now, I should like to ask, who, three years ago, tried to make political capital out of the railway men at the Hill-side Workshops? Is it not in the memory of the people of Dunedin that that honourable gentleman led the workmen from the Hill-side Workshops to the Caledonian Grounds, and there harangued them, and talked about "the wicked three"? Words could hardly be found strong enough for the honourable gentleman in which to hurl defiance and express his rage at these men, whose support he now craves. Circumstances alter cases, and that is all I have to say with regard to the honourable gentleman. But he made a statement which was perfectly correct. He said that the railway men are in the same position as those who are under military service. Unfortunately that is only too true. The railway employes of this country are as much, and more, under the military rule of these three men, and more especially of their subordinate officers, than what men in the Imperial military service are under their officers. So much for that, Sir. The remarks made by the honourable member for Avon were, I think, very pertinent to the question. He made one remark that the State has not interfered hitherto between employers and employes. As far as compulsory arbitration is concerned, it has not done so, but for years past it has in one avenue or another been legislating and interfering in the question of labour and capital, and it is only a question as to how far the State should go. Now, the honourable member for Halswell objected to a Supreme Court Judge being the head of the Arbitration Court. Well, I have always thought very strongly that a Judge of the Supreme Court should be the head of the tribunal, and for this simple reason: that under ordinary circumstances, and in small issues, a District Court Judge, or even any prominent person in New Zealand, would have sufficient status to carry his decision, but, if we come to a large issue—an issue similar in importance to what the late maritime strike was—then it is only by having a person in this country of the highest status, and entirely removed from the appearance of being influenced, and whose judgment will be upheld by the public men of New Zealand, that, whatever decision is given by a Court, it will be accepted as final by the country. The honourable gentleman also objected because he said we force the workmen into unions; and I say it is to the very best interests of capitalists in this country, or any other country, that the flotsam and jetsam of labour ranks should be forced into unions. I venture to say that more strife has been occasioned between employers and employes

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by irresponsible persons—men careless, men indifferent, men who are always fomenting mischief in the workshop—than by the real legitimate workmen. I unhesitatingly say now that the strike that occurred on the railways when the honourable member for Ellesmere was in power was largely brought about—and I say so as one who was in that affair—by men who were not really the legitimate *bond fide* workmen in those workshops. I give him that illustration; and the honourable gentleman knows I was connected with that business. He also said the Bill was purely experimental. I do not think that is so. With regard to the conciliation parts of the Bill, we are in an experimental stage in that respect. It has been largely in operation in the States, and has been extensively used in England for a number of years. It is also the law in New South Wales. It is only a question of arbitration; and the whole of our experience has been that, while you can conciliate in small matters and in minor details, when it comes to the question of large issues, involving, say, 5 or 10 per cent. or large reduction, then it utterly breaks down; because if the men think they are strong enough they will force employers to comply with their demands, and if employers consider themselves so entrenched that they can get the work done by other means, or if the unions are weak, there will be no compromises then on the part of the employers. It is owing to this that we feel that, unless we know there is behind the Board of Conciliation yet another tribunal for the settling of affairs of this kind, there will be no finality in the matter, so far as the First Part of the Bill is concerned. Without the Second Part I can assure this House that the working-men would not give the worth of the paper it is written on for it. That is our opinion, Sir. Now with regard to whether the Railway Department should come under the clauses of this Bill: In this case the Government simply takes up the functions of an ordinary employer, or ordinary carrier, and the Government is bound by the same laws. Only, since the Commissioners have been in power, they have been a law unto themselves; but, as a matter of fact, they are under the same law, and they must be governed by that law. We cannot have exceptional laws for the Government and their employés. I say that, in the best interests of the State, it would be well that we should have the Railway Department coming in under this Bill, for this reason: The employés, or nineteen-twentieths of them, belong to the railway unions, or at least would do so were it not for the pressure that is put upon a great number of them by the Railway Commissioners or their subordinate officers. Now, this is the position that faces the railway unions: They will at all times be upon their trial, and it is not likely their executive are going to allow Tom, Dick, and Harry to bring the Commissioners to this Arbitration Court unless there are sound and weighty reasons for so doing, and I say the kind of complaints that are being made now

will be obviated if this Bill is operative for the railway men, because they would have to win their case before their union before they brought any complaint against the Commissioners before the Arbitration Court; and I unhesitatingly say that no union would place itself in the position of facing the Arbitration Court unless their case was well grounded. They would take that care in the interests of their finance. They would make sure in their own mind that they would obtain a successful verdict. I am not going to speak at any length on this Bill, because it was well threshed out last year. I should, however, like to say this: If the Minister of Labour brings this Bill to a successful issue he will have carried, perhaps, the best measure that has been passed by the present Government or the last Government, and I consider that no other Bill that has passed through this House reflects so much honour and credit as does this Bill on the Minister of Labour.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Sir, I have very few words to say on this Bill. I hope and believe that when the measure is put upon the statute-book it will never be used. I should, however, like to see it put there, as its existence would give confidence. I am delighted to see the wiser and non-obstructive course which has recently been adopted by the Opposition side of this House. We all must feel that the time has arrived when the labouring-classes of this colony can and do send members to this House. Almost every one of us must feel that we are sent here by the labourers of the colony, and, surely, that being the case, they have the right to a voice in their own legislation, and in the legislation brought in by their own Ministers. They believe in these Ministers, and they have every right to do so if they please. They do not believe in the large employers or the large landowners in this country, who sit on that side of the House, and they would not trust them to legislate for them. It may be called an experiment, but the electors have a perfect right to try experiments if they please, and to employ their own friends to make them; and, like the rest of us, they will learn wisdom more quickly by experience than in any other way. I believe the working-men will make many mistakes, and their representatives will make many mistakes; but, still, these working-men will not rest until they have had an opportunity of receiving from their own representatives that legislation which they believe to be in their own interests. I believe it is wise of this House to allow such legislation to pass: and such legislation will pass in any case. If it injures any one it will injure the working-classes, so that they will soon find out whether such legislation is in their own interests, and it will make them wiser in regard to future legislation. I do not think it wise for a minority in this House, who do not represent a great many working-men, to insist on the legislation they themselves believe to be the best, or to resort to obstructive measures, for they will never get right done in that way.

Sir J. HALL.—The last speaker was of

opinion that it would not be wise of the Opposition to resist legislation of this kind. I do not know whether he means that the Opposition should not express their opinions upon the impolicy of a measure if they believe it to be impolitic, because, if that is what he means, I dissent from his statement. I am quite with him when he says that the Opposition should not obstruct. That is quite right; but I fail to see that there has been any trace of obstruction on this side of the House. It may be that many of the working-classes are under the impression that this measure will be for their benefit. I also agree with the last speaker that, whatever the result, the consequences of any failure of this measure will fall chiefly upon the working-classes. I have given my opinion before on the main feature of the Bill. It has been but little altered in Committee, and I shall therefore now trouble the House with very few words. So far as it is a conciliation Bill, and provides machinery to reconcile disputes between employers and workmen, it shall have my hearty support. The existence of such machinery will encourage people to resort to conciliation. But, where it goes further, it should not be properly called a conciliation but a coercion Bill. I think the Bill, in threatening coercion, may do serious harm. In the case of large disputes I believe it will become impracticable to carry out its provisions. In the shearers' strike in New South Wales it would have been impracticable. It would be impracticable to carry out its provisions in the case of the twenty thousand miners who are now out on strike in Wales. Then, there may be cases where an employer cannot comply with the award, as he believes, without actual loss. As a means of conciliation in this case it will be a dead-letter; and for these reasons I believe this part of the Bill to be unwise. I have a further serious objection to it, and that is that its benefits are confined to those persons who are members of trade-unions. Trade-unions have done a great deal of good in their time, and will do more; but I do not think it right to deny the advantages of any statutory provision for the reconciliation of disputes to those men who are members of trade-unions, and refuse it to others. I think it is wrong to deny to others the same facilities which are proposed to be given to trade-unions. If so, it will be a measure of coercion, as the honourable member for the Peninsula said, compelling men to "fall into line" with the unions. That is what should not be done in a free country and among free men. Then, I think it is unfortunate that it is proposed to make a Supreme Court Judge the head of the arbitration tribunal. I quite believe we should endeavour to get the most influential and respected authority we can to preside in these cases; but there is also another consideration which we should not lose sight of. A Supreme Court Judge has not the special knowledge which would qualify him to decide trade disputes. Men of a different stamp and antecedents would be better qualified than a Judge

of the Supreme Court. Moreover it is most desirable that a Judge of the Supreme Court should not be put in any position which would be likely to entail upon him popularity or unpopularity. I have given a great deal of attention to this subject, and I can find no precedent in any country in the world for this compulsory system. The weight of evidence given before the Commission now sitting, or which has recently been sitting, in the Mother-country in connection with trade disputes is distinctly against coercion, and the President of the Board of Trade has announced his intention of bringing in a Bill to give effect to the recommendation of the Commission, in which coercion was not to be a part. I will only add that I believe this Bill will tend to discourage and deter the investment of capital in labour-employing industrial undertakings. Rightly or wrongly, it will discourage and scare capital. In that way it will affect capitalists in the first instance, but eventually its effects, to a greater extent, must be felt by the workmen. The honourable member for Dunedin City said he did not think it was right that the Opposition should obstruct it. Well, we have not done so. We have expressed our opinions on the subject, as well as have honourable members on that side of the House. It is clear that the Minister of Labour, upon this occasion, relies, not upon argument, but upon votes.

Mr. REEVES.—We have had the argument more than once already.

Sir J. HALL.—It is my belief that no arguments from our side of the House will be listened to, and therefore we can only enter our protest against the objectionable portions of the Bill. We desire to put on record our honest opinion on the measure, and we must leave to the Minister of Labour and those who support him the responsibility of its passing into law.

Mr. PINKERTON.—Sir, I only wish to say a word or two on this subject. I did not intend to speak at all, but I think that several honourable members who have spoken against the Bill have looked at it from the wrong standpoint. They have looked upon it as a measure not to settle disputes but to cause disputes. The very opposite is the case. If this measure had been in force before the strike took place, the injury that resulted, not only to those engaged in it, but to others, would not have occurred, and there might not have been any necessity for legislation at the present time. Those disputes and strikes would not have taken place, and the people engaged in those disputes would not have suffered, or have suffered so largely, if a measure of this kind had been in force to settle disputes in some humane manner. Formerly, it was a matter of money against poverty. The wealthy men knew that they had only to resist for a certain time, when the process of starvation would bring the other side to subjection. In this Bill the Government will bring forward practical machinery, or a certain class of machinery, and these men, employers and employed alike, will be able to take advantage of it, and

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thus these disputes will be largely remedied. We have been told in the course of the debate that working-men do not want this class of legislation—that they did want it years ago, but they do not want it now. I know that working-men do want it. There may be those in this House who think that the working-men object, but communications are coming here to myself and others daily asking when this Bill will be brought forward, and wanting to know why it has been so long delayed. I cannot understand how any man can come here and say such a measure is not wanted. With regard to the question of compulsory arbitration, I think the principle of compulsory arbitration contained in this measure will induce contending parties to come together—that is, if they do not come together and settle the dispute beforehand. Had this Act been in force during previous disputes the knowledge that these compulsory clauses might be brought into existence would have prevented the state of things that occurred. I believe that the compulsory clauses of this Bill will be a safeguard. We have been told that the conciliatory measures in America and other places have been in force for some years, and that there has been no cause for complaint. But up to the present they have done nothing; they have been wholly a dead-letter, and must remain so until some form of compulsion is brought to bear. Therefore without the compulsory clauses the Bill might as well be dropped altogether, as really it will be no good. Under the conciliation clauses of the Bill the effect will be to bring the parties together in a friendly spirit, and the sooner contending parties are got together the sooner they will reason matters out, and the sooner the whole trouble will be over. Great disputes and strikes have resulted from the two parties not coming together, and so long as they continue in that position the difficulty will also continue and increase. Ill-feeling arises by the persons not being brought together, so that if there is no other objection the effect of the measure will be to bring them together, and to settle the dispute. Of course, we know, regarding these disputes, that anything we can do now must be for the benefit of all; but we have heard it said that anything we do now will be to the injury of the persons most interested—namely, the workers. The honourable member for Ellesmere has told us that it would be for the benefit of the trade-unions only if such a measure as this is passed.

Sir J. HALL.—For their exclusive benefit.

Mr. PINKERTON.—That is what I said: only the members of unions will have the benefit if such a measure as this is passed. It can only be within a certain direction that anything like a strike can take place. One man, in case of any disturbance, can cause a little inconvenience to his employer; but he cannot in the ordinary sense cause any such thing as an industrial war. Therefore it is absurd, in my opinion, that one man should be in a position to go to a Judge of a Supreme Court, or to an Arbitration Court, and make an

application for a hearing of his case. Therefore it should only be done where persons were combining together. They only could carry out a petition like that; and it is only in cases such as that that the Court could have any power at all. The petition has to allege a dispute. I cannot see why a Judge of the Supreme Court, or some person of equal standing, should not have a right to sit in the Court and deal with these cases. What is to prevent a Judge of the Supreme Court settling differences between an employer and workmen any more than between other classes of persons in cases of other disputes? In other cases, it is the custom for the Judge to take evidence, and on the strength of that evidence to give a decision. That is all that can be expected from him in cases under this Bill. When the persons contending bring forward their witnesses a Judge takes the evidence, and, if the Judge of the Supreme Court is a man qualified to take evidence, surely he should be qualified to give a decision, in the case of any industrial dispute that may arise as between an employer and his workmen, according to the evidence given. Suppose a case of mutiny or other trouble, or something of a more technical character, were to happen on board a ship, and the case came before a Judge of the Supreme Court. He is not an expert in these things, yet he is called upon to decide, and he gives a decision upon the evidence, after hearing both sides; and nothing more can be expected from him in such a case. Therefore a Judge of the Supreme Court, removed from local prejudices, and not in any way connected with the parties contending, is surely the best man, or the most suitable person, to settle any dispute of the kind named in the Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—Honourable gentlemen have, of course, every right to discuss the measure at this stage, and every right to advance again arguments which appear to them to be of importance, even although those arguments may have been advanced before. I do not contest their right. I merely mention the matter as an apology for the brevity of my reply: it is not because I do not give weight to some of the arguments advanced, but because those arguments have all been advanced before, some of them many times; also because, to the best of my ability, I have replied to them on several occasions. It is again alleged that the result of this Bill, whenever it gives a decision in favour of an employer, will be to ruin the employé, and whenever it gives a decision in favour of an employé the result will be to bring disaster and misery upon the employer. Well, it is quite certain that, if this be the result of the operation of the Bill during the few months before Parliament reassembles, it will next session be swept off the statute-book. I do not think the result will be what people suppose. As for the argument that every decision given by a Court of Arbitration under this Act must necessarily ruin one side or the other, I fail to see the force of it. I do not think, as a rule, that it has been the settlement of labour disputes which has been

ruinous to either party, but the process by which that result has been brought about—the disastrous and ruinous strikes and lock-outs that have occurred throughout the whole world. Several honourable gentlemen laid stress on the point that this Bill had led to a want of confidence in the country in industrial matters. I think that the well-known trouble of some two or three years ago was more the cause of that want of confidence. Then, we are warned that no decision by a compulsory Arbitration Court can be satisfactory. But, if it is quite impossible for any compulsory Court to come to any satisfactory decision in these matters, then, as regards voluntary arbitration and voluntary Boards of Conciliation, the argument is equally fatal. The voluntary cannot possibly do what the compulsory cannot. This brings to my mind the remarks of the honourable member for Avon, who spoke, I think, for the first time on this measure. The honourable gentleman said what was perfectly true, that something of this kind was called for, but he was by no means certain whether this Bill would bring about the thing desired. Nobody can possibly be certain whether a new measure will bring about the result the framer desires, or the result its enemies predict; but I think, as a rule, you will find that this Bill will not bring about the injury prophesied. It has been drafted with great care. Very careful consideration has been given to it, and, although differing in some respects, in most respects it is founded on the lines adopted by other civilised countries elsewhere. I see no reason for supposing it can do much harm, while I believe it will accomplish a great deal of good. One honourable gentleman stated that in the past the State has not been in the habit of interfering between employers and employed. If he will read history he will find that the State has never done anything else. The English statute-books are covered with laws which the State has enacted between employers and employed. Another honourable gentleman stated that there was no such thing as an Act for compulsory arbitration in existence. He is entirely wrong. In the year 1800, in the reign of George III., a Compulsory Arbitration Bill was passed, and was allowed to remain on the statute-book. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) stated that the working-classes do not now demand the measure. All I can say is, that if honourable gentlemen could see the representations made to me by working-men they would know how mistaken that view is. I have received numerous representations from working-men, and particularly from working-women, during the past twelve months, on the subject of this measure. These make it quite certain that the working-classes of the colony are eagerly looking forward to its passing. Honourable gentlemen on the other side do not see that the Bill can do any good. I am quite certain it can be made of much benefit. The very hope of such a measure being passed has done good. I have reason to

Mr. Reeves

believe so. I believe that even the hope of this Bill has done a good deal to prevent disputes between employers and employed going to the bitter end. It has also done something to prevent those disputes coming to the pitch they have come to in the neighbouring colonies. Then, honourable gentlemen on that side say that, although it is highly improper of me to hope to have any credit for this Bill if it succeeds, yet they sincerely trust all the execrations that will attend its failure, if it fails, will descend upon my devoted head.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Who said that?

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable member for Manukau said it.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—And one of the labour members.

Mr. REEVES.—While I am to get no credit if it turns out well, I shall deserve all the execration if it does not turn out well! Well, Sir, I am prepared to take up that position. I want no credit myself. All that I and those members on this side of the House wish for is the satisfaction of knowing that it has done good; and, as to the execration, we are quite prepared to run the risk of that.

Bill ordered to be committed.

Mr. REEVES moved, That, in the absence of the Chairman of Committees, the honourable member for Akaroa do take the chair.

Mr. FISH said he was not going to take exception to the honourable member for Akaroa taking the chair in the absence of the Chairman of Committees; but he desired to say that he thought the gentleman who had been appointed to the position of Chairman of Committees should be in attendance in the House to assume his position.

Mr. WARD thought it only right to say that the Chairman was absent owing to a family trouble, in connection with a relative of his in Auckland; and he was sure that, if the honourable member for Dunedin City had known that, he would not in any way have reflected upon the Chairman of Committees.

Mr. FISH said, if that was the case, certainly not.

Motion agreed to.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 17.—Industrial agreements between unions, associations, and persons.

Mr. MOORE moved, That the following words be inserted between "unions" and "and," in line 2: "or any workman or numbers of workmen, whether a member or members of a union or free workmen."

The Committee divided on the motion, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 18.

Allen	Lake	Taipua
Bruce	Mills, J.	Thompson, R.
Buchanan	Mitchelson	Valentine.
Buckland	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Duthie	Richardson	Moore
Fergus	Rolleston	Wright.
Hutchinson, G.		

NOES, 85.

Buick	Lawry	Reeves
Cadman	Mackintosh	Saunders
Carncross	McGowan	Shera
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Fish	Meredith	Tanner
Fraser	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Hall-Jones	Newman	Thompson, T.
Hogg	O'Connor	Ward.
Houston	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Parata	Earnshaw
Kelly, J.	Pinkerton	Sandford.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Hamlin	Kelly, W.
Harkness	Dawson
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Seddon
Swan.	Stout.

Majority against, 17.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 48.—Constitution of Court. Two members to be appointed by councils of workmen and employers, and a third member to be a Judge of the Supreme Court or a District Judge.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words 'or a District Judge,' proposed by the Labour Bills Committee to be struck out, stand part of the clause."

AYES, 81.

Buick	Mackintosh	Saunders
Cadman	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Duncan	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Hall	Newman	Thompson, T.
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Ward
Hogg	Palmer	Willis.
Houston	Pinkerton	
Kapa	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Rhodes	Earnshaw
Lawry	Sandford	Tanner.

NOES, 16.

Allen	Lake	Thompson, R.
Buchanan	McLean	Valentine.
Buckland	Moore	
Duthie	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Richardson	Mills, J.
Hutchison, W.	Shera	Wright.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Harkness
Kelly, W.	Hamlin
McKenzie, J.	Bruce
Seddon	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Stout.	Swan.

Majority for, 15.

Words retained.

Clause 73.—What awards shall contain. Period for which it is to be in force, &c.

Mr. DUTHIE moved, That the clause be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 82.

Buick	McGowan	Shera
Cadman	McLean	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Earnshaw	Mills, C. H.	Tanner
Hall-Jones	Newman	Taylor
Hogg	O'Connor	Ward
Houston	Parata	Willis
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	Wright.
Kelly, W.	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lawry	Russell	Kelly, J.
Mackintosh	Saunders	Sandford.

NOES, 14.

Allen	Lake	Rolleston
Buchanan	Mackenzie, T.	Swan.
Duthie	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Rhodes	Buckland
Hutchison, G.	Richardson	Wright

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Harkness
Duncan	Blake
Guinness	Mills, J.
McKenzie, J.	Bruce
Seddon	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Stout	Hamlin
Thompson, T.	Valentine.

Majority for, 18.

Clause retained.

Clause 81.—Railway Commissioners may refer disputes between them and the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants to Court. The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be a clause of the Bill."

AYES, 26.

Cadman	McLean	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	Meredith	Smith, W. C.
Hall-Jones	Mills, C. H.	Tanner
Hogg	Newman	Taylor
Houston	Pinkerton	Thompson, T.
Kelly, W.	Reeves	Ward.
Lawry	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mackintosh	Saunders	Earnshaw
McGowan	Shera	Kelly, J.

NOES, 18.

Allen	Mitchelson	Russell.
Duthie	Moore	
Hall	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Richardson	Buckland
Mackenzie, T.	Rolleston	Wright.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carncross	Swan
Dawson	Harkness
Guinness	Mills, J.
McKenzie, J.	Bruce
Parata	Buchanan
Seddon	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Stout.	Hamlin.

Majority for, 18.

Clause retained.

Bill reported.

On the question, That the Bill be read a third time,

Mr. ROLLESTON said,—Sir, I do not know whether the House will desire to postpone the third reading of this Bill. As far as I am concerned, I desire to take the opportunity of entering my protest against this Bill. I think that no more mischievous Bill has been passed by this House. I do not wish to detain the House to make any speech on this occasion, but I think that the Minister who has concocted this Bill, and carried it through, will live to regret what he has done.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—Sir, I desire, also, to enter my protest against this Bill. I think that the inclusion of the Judges of the Supreme Court in the Court of Arbitration is a very serious mistake, and that it will lead to extraordinary difficulties. It will lead to Judges having to adjudicate in their Court on matters they have adjudicated upon in the Courts of Arbitration. It will lead to a great deal of confusion—the Judges being brought into such close communion with the people, and the ordinary commercial community, that the chances are it will lower their status in the colony. The other objection I have is to the Railway Commissioners being included in the operation of the Bill. I think it would be just as proper to put the whole Civil Service in. It is a great mistake, and I believe that the whole of the members who have voted for this Bill will yet live to repent it. I think that a good many of the more persistent followers of the Government expect some great event to happen through the passing of this Bill. I do not know whether they expect an eclipse of the moon, or what. Perhaps they expect a high rate of wages and a drop in the price of the commodities they require. They are probably looking forward to something. But I hope they are not looking forward to using this measure, because I say, if this Bill is used once, it will not be used again. It will have the effect of destroying unionism; and on the heads of the labour members, and on the Government, who have voted against their convictions—on their heads be this result.

Mr. McLEAN.—I only wish to say one word. I have said nothing on the Bill before, and I desire to add a few words to what has already been said. I do not believe the doleful prophecies of the honourable members on the other side of the House with regard to this Bill. I believe the Bill is a very good measure, and will prevent war, instead of bringing war on. I do not think any member on this side of the House expects anything great. We believe it will bring about peace instead of war. I am perfectly satisfied the Bill is a good one, and that it will help to keep down those disturbances we saw in this colony a few years ago. The Minister of Labour has paid a great deal of attention to this measure, and is deserving of the greatest amount of credit from both sides of the House.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I have taken no active part in this measure, but I intend to say a word or two on the passing of the Bill. I fear that this Bill, instead of assisting the unionists of this colony, will to a great extent

have the contrary effect. I consider that this Bill, and a number of kindred measures, have had a great deal to do with the shrinking of enterprise in our centres of population. We know that at the present time a number of manufacturers are making very little out of their ventures, and if you pass a law which will practically take out of their hands the control of their own wages fund it will have this effect: that men will not venture upon a further extension of industries, and if that is so a number of men who might otherwise be employed will probably not receive employment at all. I do not say this in antagonism to the Bill. I believe the mover of the Bill has given it very deep and far-reaching consideration, and that he believes it is a step in the right direction. On the other hand, I feel strongly that it will not tend to the development of industrial enterprise in our large centres of population. Holding these opinions, I have voted against some of the clauses. At the same time, it is not my intention to vote at all if a vote is taken on the third reading. If the Bill is to carry out what the promoters hold it will carry out—and there is a big majority in this House of that opinion—then the only thing we can do is to permit them to have an opportunity of carrying their legislation into effect.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I do not anticipate all the evil effects which the leader of the Opposition anticipates this Bill will have. I believe it will be found in practice that this Bill is a good Bill, and I think it is a little ungenerous on the part of honourable members on the other side of the House to say that they hope the Minister of Labour and the labour members will live to regret the passing of this Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I never said I hoped so. I said that would be the result.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—However, I do not think we need fear any such thing. I am quite sure of this: that those here who are representing labour in this House have given that side of the question as much thought, perhaps from their point of view, as honourable members on the other side have given it from their point of view. And we are quite satisfied to leave the results of this Bill to be decided in the future; and I think we can look forward to the result with confidence. The whole of our efforts have been directed towards the solution of the problem how best to solve these continuous conflicts between capital and labour—how best to conserve the wages fund to the workers, instead of its being dissipated in strikes. I think the antagonism with which this Bill has been received comes with a very bad grace from the Opposition, who have all along assumed that they have been trying their best to stay these strikes. They have been always deploring them, and yet they do not assist us in any measure to bring about the solution of the question—with the exception of one honourable gentleman from the Opposition side of the House, who undoubtedly gave us some valuable assistance in bringing this measure to direct lines. With that exception, we have had no suggestions of a character worthy of

members of the Opposition. We have done our best to make this a workable measure, and as the Bill stands I think we can confidently say that this Bill is in the foremost rank of labour Bills introduced in any country in the world. And the workers of New Zealand are greatly indebted to the Minister of Labour for the undoubted ability he has brought to bear on the carrying of this Bill into effect.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, I should only like to say one word. I have said nothing on this Bill before, partly because on its main issues I am in favour of it. But as to that part of the Bill referring to compulsory arbitration, it is of an experimentally doubtful character, and what its effects will be none of us can now tell. The Minister will, unfortunately, stick to this scheme of his. He might have had a Conciliation Bill on the statute-book last year if he had omitted the compulsory portion of it. He ought to have accepted the Bill without the clause relating to compulsory arbitration. All the authorities agree in saying that compulsory arbitration will not be found to be of service in this colony.

Mr. VALENTINE.—I would not have risen excepting for a remark I overheard by the honourable member for Heathcote, who said, "Let us try." Sir, this is the key to the whole thing. It is a question of "Let us try." We know nothing of what the effect will be; but the Government are prepared to try; and that has been their maxim from the time they took office. Experimental legislation has been the order of the day from the beginning to the end. Of this one Bill of an experimental character my own opinion is that the Bill will be absolutely a dead-letter. We have had too much experimental legislation. For that reason I have opposed the Bill, and shall do so to the end. The honourable member for the Peninsula said that a great deal was anticipated from this Bill—that good results would be derived from it. I hope that, if anything comes from this Bill, it will be good results, but I doubt whether any result will come from it at all. I hope, however, that the honourable gentleman is right in expecting good results to follow; but, as has been said by members of the Opposition, whatever may be the result it will lie at the door of the Minister of Labour and other honourable members on that side, who are prepared to accept all responsibility. I do not think the result will be much, because I do not think the Bill will be used in many cases at all. I think, in fact, as I have said already, it will be a dead-letter.

Mr. HOGG.—I support this Bill because I believe it is designed with a good and useful object. It is not likely to prevent strikes, but the intention of the Bill is to prevent human suffering. We know from the history of the past that when a conflict occurs between capital and labour a vast amount of suffering is very frequently produced. From what we see in other parts of the world, we can easily imagine the vast amount of privation and suffering that ensues where there is a large trade strike. Now, Sir, the object of this Bill is, by esta-

blishing a Board of Conciliation, to bring about a good feeling between the workmen and their employers. If it has that effect it will achieve a very useful purpose indeed. It seems to me to be a matter extremely to be regretted that when a conflict occurs between working-men and their masters reliance should be placed by the employers on such a method of bringing men into subjection as starving them out. I have read of one remark that was made not very long ago by the chairman of directors of one of the large American syndicates. A strike was likely to occur, and, addressing the other directors, he made this remark. He said, "Gentlemen, I can take this dollar, and I can place it on that shelf there, and allow it to remain there for the next twelve months. At the end of that time that dollar is there; it retains all its present value; it is unimpaired in any way; it will be as serviceable then as it is to-day. But, if you place one of those workmen on that shelf, and keep him there for a year, what do you find then? Skin and bone—a human skeleton. That is the difference. We can afford to keep our capital idle, but our men cannot afford to dispense with their wages." And the suffering is far-reaching, because it presses not simply on the working-men, but upon their unfortunate families. Whatever may be said of this Bill, I believe it has been very carefully drawn up. It has been elaborated, and great pains have been bestowed upon it by the honourable gentleman who has introduced it to this House; and I think it reflects very great credit on him indeed. It may be said by some honourable members that these labour Bills are not required; but when I look on the occurrences of the last few years in New Zealand, and the other colonies, and what is now taking place in other parts of the world, I think it cannot be doubted that the Bill is a most important measure; and I consider, indeed, that it is one of the most important measures that have been attempted to be passed by the present Parliament. I do not agree with the prediction which has been made by members on the other side of the House that it is likely to be either a dead-letter or to achieve results very different from those aimed at. My own impression is that if a conflict between capital and labour occurs again in this colony this Bill will be found to be extremely useful: at any rate, I hope that will be the case. The intention of its supporters is that this Bill shall be thoroughly operative. It may have defects, but those defects can be amended at a future stage. We do not expect that any measure of this kind can be perfect when passed, but the measure, I think, has been well devised, and will, I believe, be found to be extremely useful in the immediate future.

Mr. TANNER.—It is very painful, during three sessions, to listen again and again to a repetition of arguments against this Bill, and to be compelled from time to time to show a clear case why it should be passed. It makes one feel weary of the task of getting a Bill through the House, or doubtful of obtaining

what shall be in any sense a satisfactory measure. We are to-night reproached with silence, and finally taunted with the fact that the Bill is to be an experiment. I do not intend to say for a moment that I do not regard the Bill largely in the light of an experiment, but I say that any man who takes any interest in the condition of affairs in the industrial world at the present time should be delighted at the prospect of attempting an experiment which promises good results—always assuming that he is desirous of soothing the existing causes of friction, which in some of the older States of the world have developed at times into something hardly distinguishable from civil war. To devise some means, however imperfect, to effect this result, to me seems better than allowing this colony to witness such scenes as those which have been too common in America: for instance, as that at Pennsylvania in 1876, and in the mining States of the West only a few years ago, and the horrible massacre which occurred at Carnegie's works only last year. Our aim is to keep this colony free, and its early years unsullied by such social warfare; for scenes like these stain the history of any country eternally. It is with the object of preventing the occurrence of such things that I think some arrangement should be set afoot to accomplish this purpose as far as possible. But it is asked, Why do we want compulsory arbitration? Simply because voluntary arbitration has not so far been the success it might be. I could point to many past instances in this colony where bodies of working men have asked their employers over and over again to meet and confer, and deal with certain points, but they have been met from time to time with a refusal. That is why we want compulsory arbitration. Then, it is asked, Why do you want Judges of the Supreme Court and District Court to preside over these Arbitration Courts? The reply is, We want men of high character and standing, and men of independence, who are likely to judge fairly and reasonably on the evidence given before them. There is no doubt that in the Old Country there are men who would be able to fill that position with advantage, who have no legal or official standing, but who nevertheless command general respect—men like Sir Rupert Kettle and the late Cardinal Manning—men of a class of which we have too few in this colony, because nearly every one in this young country is more or less connected with some commercial pursuit, and is in such a position that his sympathies must naturally be enlisted on either one side or the other. That is the reason why we desire a Judge of the Supreme Court to act under this Bill.

Mr. WILSON.—I did not vote on this question in Committee, as I happened to be "paired," and therefore I have not been able to give any expression of my views upon it in that way. I have, however, given the Bill generally my support, except in regard to the portion which includes the Railway Commissioners in the Bill. The honourable member

Mr. Tanner

for the Peninsula accused the Opposition of not treating this Bill fairly.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Not giving us that assistance which we might have expected.

Mr. WILSON.—When a Bill of this character passes through Committee in the short time this has done, I do not think the honourable gentleman's remark is deserved. It was put into Committee at nine o'clock, and it passed through Committee within two hours. It seems to me, therefore, that the Opposition have done very well in getting through the Bill so quickly. I do not think it is a fair thing to tax the Opposition with not giving assistance in regard to this measure.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I mean in regard to the drafting of it.

Mr. WILSON.—Surely the honourable member could not expect us to assist in drafting the Bill; and probably the Government would not have accepted our drafting if we had offered our assistance. I may say that I agree very largely with what fell from the last speaker in reference to a Judge of the Supreme Court acting under this Bill. It seems to me that a Judge being there gives us an assurance that everything will be done fairly for both sides; and that assurance is necessary if the Bill is to be of any use to the public.

Mr. REEVES.—Like speakers who have preceded me, I have very few words to say. I have to thank the honourable gentlemen of the Opposition for the very fair and courteous treatment which they have accorded this Bill. I do not think that any measure could have been more fairly treated than this has been treated, both last year and this, by Her Majesty's Opposition in this House. I am bound to say I do not think it has received the same fair-play in another place. I do not think that drawing a blue line through four pages of a Bill and sending it back to the member who drafted it is discharging the functions of a Chamber of revision. But, at the same time, I trust that honourable gentlemen in another place will this session address themselves to their task with somewhat of a more judicial spirit and equable mind. That may be as it may be. Then, I wish to say now that the Government will not accept an emasculated Bill. Unless the Bill is passed in a shape which gives it a fair chance of being a reality, I think it is better that it should not be passed at all. The statute-book of Great Britain and those of other countries are littered with Acts which have remained dead-letters. They have been drawn up with the most benevolent intentions, and with a good deal of legal and technical skill, and they have been absolutely of no use from their passing to the present time. The fact is, the English Parliament, from 1800 until the present time, has been tinkering with the question of arbitration and conciliation, and no single case that I have heard of has been decided under one of their Conciliation or Arbitration Acts. The truth is, they shirked the question of making arbitration compulsory. They left it to the parties to use the law or not as they chose. The result

is that parties have not used it; and they are never likely to do so unless they are virtually forced to do so. The experience of the civilised world points to that mournful fact. Therefore Parliament has to ask itself this question: Are we to stop strikes and lock-outs, or are we to stand on one side and let the parties fight it out? I am proud of one thing, and that is that it has been left to this democratic House—a House which for the first time contains members of the working-classes, a House which represents the working-classes as no previous House has done—to pass this Bill, and make a real attempt to render strikes and lock-outs impossible. I do not know whether it will succeed or not. I have some fears that the Bill will not be allowed to go on the statute-book in such a state that we can accept it, or in such a state that it is likely to do any good. I wish I could hope otherwise. I wish this Bill might be allowed to have a fair chance for a few months at any rate, so that we might see whether we are justified in expecting what we do of it. However, as I have said before, if this Bill is not sent back in a workable shape I think it better to possess ourselves with patience and wait another year or two. I am convinced that, sooner or later, the democracy of New Zealand will insist upon a Bill of this character being placed upon the statute-book. I may not be here when that is done, but some one else will be here. I do not say even that it will be a Liberal Government that will pass it, for I believe, if we do not succeed, that honourable gentlemen on the other side, through sheer weariness of industrial warfare, will take up the Bill and pass it. I have the most absolute faith in an educated people like ours substituting the fair decisions of a Court of justice for the insane and suicidal industrial warfare which has prevailed in other countries, and, to a certain extent, in this country. Honourable gentlemen on the other side ask why the Minister has insisted upon the compulsory clause. The Minister has insisted upon the compulsory clause simply because he has read and studied the working of arbitration in other countries, and it so has been forced upon his mind that a Bill without a compulsory clause is of no use whatever. I have to thank the honourable member for Clutha for his kindly expression of opinion as regards myself and this Bill. I have to thank the honourable member for the Peninsula, and the honourable member for Heathcote, and other members who have spoken in defence of the Bill; and I have also to thank other honourable gentlemen who have kept silence not because they had not a great deal to say, but because they felt that they were facilitating the progress of the Bill by refraining from speaking. I would have reminded the honourable member for Ellesmere, had he been present, that, though no State in America has up to the present adopted compulsory arbitration, there is one Territory which has adopted it. Probably, if the honourable gentleman had known that instance, it might have largely influenced his opinion, because it is the Terri-

tory of Wyoming. I am almost inclined to think that had I been able to tell that to the honourable member for Ellesmere at first he would have reconsidered his attitude on this Bill; but I am exceedingly glad to make this announcement in the absence of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), because I think, even at this late stage, if he knew that compulsory arbitration had been adopted by the Territory of Wyoming, he might stonewall the Bill. I have now only to thank the House for the fair treatment which it has given my Bill, and to hope it will have better luck in another place than it had last year.

Bill read a third time.

CONSPIRACY LAW AMENDMENT BILL.

Mr. REEVES.—I desire the House to read this Bill a second time, in order that it may be referred to the Labour Bills Committee. I do not think there can be any opposition to this measure. Of course it is a Bill which holds out temptations to one to launch into an historical speech on the English law of conspiracy in relation to labour disputes, but I do not intend to yield to that temptation. I will simply explain to the House what the measure is, and why it has been brought in. This Bill is one which goes in the direction of assimilating our law to the law of the Mother-country. It consists virtually of two sections and a schedule—section 2 and section 3, with the schedule attached to section 3. Section 2 provides simply, in regard to labour disputes, that no combination of persons shall be held to lay them open to a charge of conspiracy unless it is a combination to do an act which would have been a crime, or an attempted crime, if committed by an individual. It may seem somewhat odd to us in this country that there should be such a thing as a crime of this kind—that it should be a crime for certain persons to combine together to do in common what each of them might have done singly. Nevertheless, by the law of the Mother-country that was a crime until the year of Grace 1875. I need not go back to the Middle Ages, or even to that period in English law antecedent to the year 1800. But I must go back to the year 1800, just for the purpose of saying one word as to the combination law of that date. The famous combination laws of 1799 and 1800 virtually repealed most of the previous Acts relating to the connection of masters and apprentices, and the combination of workmen of all kinds. But they enacted and imposed many restrictions of the most stringent kind conceivable. Any kind of combination among workmen to raise their wages, or to affect the manner in which masters should choose to conduct their business, was to be considered to be a crime. This law was found to be such a harsh and tyrannical measure that in 1824 an Act of a tolerably liberal nature was passed. The Act of 1824 repealed a great mass of more or less obsolete labour laws. In fact, to read the preamble of that Act is to obtain a most vivid impression of the enormous amount of

legislation which encumbered the English statute-book for centuries on this subject. It repealed all these old Acts, and gave workmen the power to combine together for the purpose of raising their wages, although it hedged them round with a great many provisos. The result of that law was that a considerable number of trade-unions made their appearance on the scene, and a number of strikes followed. English public opinion at that time was rather easily scared on labour questions, and the result was that these strikes and these disputes scared Parliament into repealing the Act of 1824 by the passing of the famous Act, 6 Geo. IV.—that is to say, the Act of 1825, which, under the name of the Intimidation Act, was the law of England until 1875, and has remained the law in certain British colonies up to the present time. I believe it is still the law in Queensland and in New South Wales. It is still the law in New Zealand. Now, the preamble of that Act contains the spirit of the Act. Speaking of these combinations of workmen, it says,—

“Whereas such combinations are injurious to trade and commerce, dangerous to the tranquillity of the country, and especially prejudicial to the interests of all who are concerned in them; and whereas it is expedient to make further provision as well for the security and personal freedom of individual workmen in the disposal of their skill and labour as for the security of the property and persons of masters and employers, and for that purpose to repeal the said Act, and to enact other provisions and regulations in lieu thereof.”

Now, that contains the spirit of the Act. It was held that these combinations were dangerous to life and limb, prejudicial to the liberty of the individual workman, and to the property and security of the masters. Therefore the Act of 1824, which allowed considerable freedom of combination, was repealed, and the Act of 1825 passed. That Act professed to give workmen the right of combination, but it did so in a very peculiar way. It allowed workmen to meet together and agree among themselves as to the amount of wages they should henceforth demand; but if these workmen laid their heads together and did anything by word or by deed to bring any kind of pressure to bear on their masters to give them the wages they agreed to demand, or to bring any kind of pressure on their fellow-workmen to stand up for the same wages, they would be guilty of conspiracy. Moreover, the Act contained a number of stringent provisions as regards threats, molestation, and interference; and I may say that the interpretation which the English law-courts gave to the statute of threats, molestation, or interference was of a very startling kind. The Judges, in fact, decided that if any man attempted to bring pressure to bear on his master he must be held to have used a threat or to be guilty of molestation. For instance, if three workmen agreed together to tell the master that, unless he dismissed such-and-such a workman—who, probably, was not

a member of their union—a “blackleg,” as they called him—they would not work for him any longer, that was held to be in the nature of intimidation and molestation, and to render these men criminally liable for conspiracy. It is, Sir, too early in the morning for me to rehearse to the House certain iniquitous and barbarous decisions given under this law of George IV. But there is the case of the Dorchester agricultural labourers; there is the case of the Glasgow cotton-spinners; and similar cases, against which public opinion in England revolted in the most open manner. In the case of the Dorchester agricultural labourers I think something like four hundred thousand persons protested against the punishment inflicted on these men, who were transported to New South Wales merely because they combined with one another to induce their fellow-workmen to demand a higher rate of wages. In point of fact, men were sent to gaol again and again for doing that which in this country has always been deemed to be the right of all workmen to do—namely, to combine for the purpose of inducing their masters to raise their wages, to alter their hours of labour, and of inducing their fellow-workmen by every means short of personal violence or gross intimidation to stand in with them and take up the same position. At last this state of things was felt in England to be barbarous. An Act was passed in 1871, and, that Act having led to certain decisions in the High Court of Justice, the Act of 1875 was passed, which placed the law of England in this respect on a liberal footing. I have thought it necessary not only to repeal the statute of George IV. and these other more or less obsolete statutes, but to provide that the common-law doctrine of conspiracy in labour disputes shall no longer apply to this colony. Because, although the Act of George IV. affixed stringent penalties to all sorts of individual acts on the part of workmen, in the way of molestation, interference, dictation, and so forth, yet, oddly enough, it did not make the conspiracy to do these things a crime. It appears to me that it was taken for granted by the Parliament of that time that there existed an offence at common law of this nature. It seems to have been thought that to conspire together to do those things which were by statute rendered illegal in the case of individuals was in itself an offence under the common law, though I believe some English writers now doubt whether the decision is right that such an offence did exist under the common law. Section 2 of this Bill is virtually taken word for word from the English Act of 1875. It has never existed in New Zealand hitherto, but I hope it will exist henceforth. As regards the antique statute of the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth, dealing with the law relating to master and apprentice, oddly enough, although that, to a large extent, was repealed in the reign of George III., it was not entirely repealed in England until 1863. It also appears that the extraordinary Act of George I. relating to the woollen industries is still partly

Mr. Reeves

law in New Zealand. I do not think there was any likelihood of a prosecution under it, but it is just as well to put the law right. With these few words, I ask the House to read the Bill a second time. It may be supposed by honourable members that we are really doing this rather for the purpose of putting our law on a scientific basis than to provide against any possible abuse or attempt to use these barbarous enactments. But within the last few years, in Australia, to the great astonishment of the population there, this stringent and almost barbarous statute of George IV. has been disinterred and made use of both in Queensland and New South Wales. Men have been sent to gaol under it, and I believe it is only by reason of the clemency exercised on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of York quite recently that certain of these men, as a matter of Royal grace, were released from gaol. What working-men in Australia have suffered their fellows in New Zealand might possibly have to suffer also, and therefore it is no fanciful danger we are seeking to avoid by the passing of this Bill. There is no reason to anticipate that the passing of this law will render us less able to deal with any breach of the peace, or with violence or intimidation. These offences are dealt with amply already in our Police Offences Act. If you threaten a man or ill-treat him in New Zealand you are dealt with by the ordinary law just as in any other civilised land you would be dealt with if you threatened or ill-treated a man. If the threat is followed up by violence you are arrested. If you attempt to strike a man you are punished for assault, and if you actually strike him you are punished for battery. If two or more combine to do these things they are liable to be punished for conspiring to commit a crime. There is no possible danger to the public peace by the passing of this Act; and I think, in the interests of justice, the time has now passed when any civilised legislator will consider that, if working-men should combine together to protect their own interests in matters affecting themselves, they should be put on a different footing from that occupied by members of other sections of the community. With these few words, Sir, I beg to move, That the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I should only like to say this: After the masterpiece of the Minister of Labour—the greatest work we have had this session, or for five or six sessions—it seems a strange thing that after that Bill, which was going to work peace for everybody, the first following measure should be a Bill to amend our conspiracy laws, and to legalise picketing and all the machinery necessary to carry on a strike.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON.—I am not going to say anything on this Bill to-night, for I shall defer what I have to say till it comes back from the Labour Bills Committee. Only one word now—that I support the Bill very heartily. I am quite sure that it is an honest effort on the part of the Minister of Justice to amend the law. With reference to his explanation that there will be no fear of any harassment

of the working-people hereafter, I have to say this: that I am quite satisfied that a vast amount of conspiracy laws will still be found knocking about after we have passed this Bill, so much so that I have to inform him, at this early stage, that when the Bill comes before the House again I shall propose considerable amendments in it. It contains only one operative clause, which the honourable gentleman has told us is precisely the same as in the English Act of 1875. All I have to say further in the meantime is this: My honourable friend referred to the punishment of certain men in Australia. That was the thing that made me originally turn my attention to conspiracy law. A number of working-men at Broken Hill suffered long terms of imprisonment in the most unrighteous and undeserving way, I venture to say, through those miserable old Acts of Parliament being raked up for the purpose of punishing men for the assertion of liberty of speech and action. It is a very large order, these conspiracy laws of England; and when we have passed this Bill—as I believe we shall do; every reasonable person will be concerned to have it passed—there will be still a great deal to look after in the way of conspiracy, so long as the exceptions made in this little Bill continue. You will find riot, and unlawful assembly, and a great many other things, which have absolutely no meaning in this country, but which may be made to have a meaning if unreasonable men choose to invoke them for certain ends.

Mr. REEVES.—I have merely to point out to my honourable friend the member for Dundedin City that clause 2 is far from being the only clause in the Bill. If clause 3, with the schedule attached, were not in the Bill clause 2 might as well be thrown away, because unless you repeal 6 George IV., with the offences mentioned therein, you make perfectly useless the clause of the Act that nobody shall become guilty of conspiracy for combining to do an Act which is not a crime if done by an individual; because all these things are crimes if done by an individual under that statute, and therefore still remain crimes if done by a combination. It is absolutely necessary, therefore, to sweep away 6 George IV. before you can have a chance of making the 2nd clause useful. I entirely acknowledge that it was the honourable gentleman who caused me to look into the matter, and I thank him for the kindness he has done me, and which I believe he has done to the working-men of New Zealand. I believe it is a very useful Act, and it is quite right that the law should be so. If men meet together and conspire together to put dynamite in the hold of a vessel, to poison people, or to pelt them with stones, I think it is quite right they should go to gaol, and I think every respectable unionist thinks the same, because they know the discredit which this sort of thing brings upon the very name of trade-unionism. I have nothing more to say.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past twelve o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 29th August, 1898.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Readings—
Oamaru Loans Consolidation Bill—Pharmacy
Bill—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill,
Workmen's Wages Bill.

SECOND READING.

Wanganui Hospital Board Empowering Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Otago Harbour Board Empowering Bill,
Rohe Potae Investigation of Title Bill.

OAMARU LOANS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR moved, *That this Bill be now read the third time.*

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN would draw the attention of the Hon. the Speaker to the manner in which these Bills were put on the Order Paper. That particular Bill appeared on the Paper without any previous notice. He saw there was another one brought up by the Private Bills Committee which had been reported upon, and there was no notice whatever of it appearing on the Order Paper, whereas the same course should have been adopted in connection with it as had been adopted in connection with other Bills, and whoever had charge of that Bill should set it down for its second or third reading for a certain day. One was taken by surprise on seeing that Bill on the Order Paper that day. The Bill itself might be a good Bill, and, so far as the people of Oamaru were concerned, he thought the Council could sympathize very much with them. They had brought in a Bill which he did not feel justified in opposing, but he thought the Council should know that they were entering upon legislation which might bring them into trouble in the future. The only thing to be said about this Bill was that it was a private Bill, and might not come within the category of the other Bills he complained of, and thus form a precedent. What he wished now particularly to draw attention to was, that under the Municipal Act they had fixed the maximum rate up to which the inhabitants of the Town of Oamaru could be rated. It appeared that a clause had got into the Act of 1886 under which it was argued that a Receiver could collect a rate up to any amount he wished to make it, and that was a point in this Bill which he thought went outside what was considered to be the municipal law, and which allowed the bondholders in this case to rate up to any amount which would pay 5 per cent. interest. That was the point in the Bill which should be seen to in connection with the Municipal Act, and he questioned whether they should not fix a

maximum amount under which the Municipal Council could rate. No doubt the Council had great sympathy with the Corporation, on account of this debt of £178,000. £143,000 of it had been spent in bringing water into the Town of Oamaru; and, after they had spent all that, and had a good supply of water, there was a sludge-channel made above the water-works; and the bottle he held in his hand contained a sample of the water they had paid £143,000 for, and which was served to the inhabitants of Oamaru at the present time. He would like to know what his prohibition friends would think of such water as that. He thought something ought to be done to put a stop to that evil, and an endeavour made to render what they had spent—the result of which was perfectly useless—of a profitable character. He did not feel justified in taking any action against this Bill, but he simply wished to point out what appeared to be the law under the Municipal Act. He was quite sure that when it was being passed he never intended it to bear the construction put upon it; neither did most of his honourable friends in the Council.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS said that at an earlier stage of the Bill there had been a discussion on the general question, and some of them had expressed an opinion that the principle of the alteration of the position of the debenture-holders without their consent was a dangerous one, and that, however much they were convinced that the interests of the debenture-holders generally were conserved by this Bill, notwithstanding that there were no dissentients among the bondholders to the proposed arrangement, the Legislature ought not to take the responsibility of interfering. A Select Committee had reported elaborately on the Bill, and they had made a discovery which was not previously made in this direction. They were never led to believe, by any one before the Committee sat, that there was any active dissent from this proposal; but reference to the report which was since made established conclusively that the Committee had ascertained that there were bondholders dissenting from this proposal in an active manner to the extent of £6,900. It appeared to him very important that that point should not escape the attention of honourable members. The view that he took on an earlier occasion was greatly confirmed and strengthened by the discovery which had been made by the Committee; and if this Bill passed, carrying with it the principle of interference by the Legislature in a matter as between the bondholders and local bodies to whom the latter owed money, they might be entering upon a sea of troubles, and he earnestly begged honourable members to pause before they placed upon this colony such a tremendous responsibility as was involved in the principle which it was proposed to establish.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN did not think that the complaint of his honourable friend Mr. McLean respecting the order of procedure in connection with this Bill was justified. The

Bill was put on the Order Paper in accordance with the usual procedure applicable to Bills of this character—namely, private Bills. No notice in this case was required to be given. With regard to the objection as to the rating-power under the Municipal Act, that could not apply in this instance at all, because the rate provided for by this Bill extended over a large district, of which the municipality was only a part.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS thought it would be as well to take the Bill into Committee of the whole Council again after the objections that had been raised. He had always been given to understand that the rate was to be limited to 4s. in the pound, and that a Receiver was to be appointed to receive that amount. He would like to move, *That the Hon. the Speaker do leave the chair, and that the Council go into Committee on the Bill.*

The Hon. the SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not make that motion.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR thought they could not gain anything at all by recommitting the Bill, even if it were possible to do so. The facts had been set forth in a very clear way in the special report of the Committee, and it was simply a question for the Council to decide whether they should recognise the arrangement which had been entered into or not. It was quite true what the Hon. Mr. Stevens had said—that bondholders representing six thousand nine hundred pounds' worth of bonds did not say they opposed the measure, but they would not give a formal assent; and that had been made a point of. As a matter of fact, they received notice in February that application was to be made to the Legislature to pass a Bill giving effect to the agreement, a copy of which was submitted to every bondholder, and they did not absolutely oppose the proposal. On the contrary, both the Borough Council and the bondholders said they were perfectly willing and anxious to have this matter brought to a head; and, being a private Bill, and not one which could affect the public policy of the colony in any way, and over nine-tenths of the bondholders having absolutely agreed, he thought the Council must recognise that, under all the circumstances, this was the best arrangement that could be come to. He had no interest at all in the matter, but he thought this arrangement would be the means of getting rid of a very difficult and unpleasant position.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said his honourable friend Mr. Bonar did not appear to be correctly informed. The report of the Committee was that, subsequently, holders of bonds to the value of £2,500 had expressed their approval of the Bill. Of the remaining £17,000, debenture-holders to the value of £6,900 had intimated that they did not consent to the Bill: in other words, they were dissentients. With regard to the residue, there had been no expression of approval or disapproval. It appeared that the addresses of some of these were unknown, so that they had not been informed of the provisions. It appeared to him

that there was grave reason to cause the Council to pause before finally dealing with a matter of that sort, and consideration should be given to ascertain whether or not it would be possible to put into the Bill provisions which would allow of the operation of such an agreement as this, provided that before it was given effect to those dissentients might be dealt with. In his opinion, if the Council passed such a Bill, it was giving the sanction of the Legislature to a repudiation of engagements which had been entered into—a step which ought not to be taken without the very gravest consideration, and which only the very best reasons could justify. He would move the adjournment of the debate, in order that time might be given to consider it.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR, on the question of the adjournment of the debate, would like to explain a matter upon which the Hon. Mr. Ormond had just touched. When the Bill was first introduced, bondholders representing £154,200 had already given their distinct adherence, in accordance with the circular sent to them in February last. Since then others, to the extent of £2,500, had given their adherence as well; so that reduced the number unaccounted for—£17,100. In connection with the £17,100, there were bondholders representing the amount of £6,900 who had declined to give their assent, but who had not taken any further steps whatever. They had noticed that Parliament was to be applied to, and that this Bill was to be asked for. They had been supplied with a copy of the agreement, and they had not been represented in any way before Parliament; and therefore, he said, as there had been no attempt at opposition, it seemed to him their action was purely a negative action. Seeing, therefore, that the large majority of the bondholders had given their absolute assent, and the other nine-tenths had taken no active steps, he thought that was a very reasonable ground for saying that the arrangement provided for in the Bill was the best thing that could be done under the circumstances.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said, as one who was connected with the place, and was a ratepayer, he must raise his voice against the insinuations of some honourable gentlemen that the Corporation of Oamaru was repudiating. He did not agree with that at all. There was no repudiation at all so far as the Corporation was concerned. They struggled for years to pay the interest—7 per cent.—and it had caused a great depreciation of the value of property. He thought it was the ratepayers who had got the grievance. In the first place, the bondholders had got an extension of the term for fourteen years of the legal currency of their debentures, and they were getting a better security than they had hitherto possessed. They could only enforce the 1s., 1s. 3d., and 1s. 6d. in the pound. What would be the unfortunate position of Oamaru? The value of property was going down. The bondholders had power to rate up to 20s. in the pound. Who had got the advantage—the bondholders, the leaseholders,

or the Corporation? They did not ask for anything from them. They were in a very unfortunate position, having constructed works which were made almost useless by the action of the Government, and which had been constructed for the use of future generations. They were virtually public works, and ought to be cared for by the State. There was no repudiation whatever on the part of the Corporation. The repudiation was on the other side. It was not his intention to vote either for or against the Bill; but when he heard insinuations of that kind he considered it his duty to stand up and protect the interests and the characters of the ratepayers.

The Council divided.

AYES, 22.

Acland	MacGregor	Reynolds
Bolt	McCullough	Rigg
Buckley	McLean	Stevens
Dignan	Montgomery	Swanson
Grace	Oliver	Whitmore
Johnston	Ormond	Whyte
Kelly	Pharazyn	Williams.
Mantell		

NOES, 16.

Baillie	Jenkinson	Stewart
Barnicoat	Jennings	Taiaroa
Bonar	Kerr	Wahawaha
Feldwick	Pollen	Walker, L.
Hart	Richardson	Walker, W.
Holmes		

Majority for, 6.

Debate adjourned.

PHARMACY BILL.

On the question, *That this Bill be now read the third time,*

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, *That the Bill be recommitted, in order that the following amendment might be inserted:—*

"Notwithstanding anything contained in any Act, every pharmaceutical chemist may open his shop for the supply of medicines and surgical appliances to the public between the hours of nine and ten o'clock in the morning of any Sunday or public holiday, and between the hours of seven and nine o'clock in the evening of any such days as aforesaid up to any day appointed under any Act for the time being in force for the closing of shops in the afternoons in any city, borough, or town district, and shall at any time in the aforesaid days respectively supply any medicine or surgical appliances urgently required by any person, but shall not open his shop for such purpose."

The object of the amendment was to insure a certain amount of protection to the public. He had no desire to interfere with the measure, but he thought it was necessary that there should be some one on the premises on holidays and Sundays in case of medicine or surgical appliances being required.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN hoped the Council would not permit the Bill to be recommitted for the purpose of inserting the amendment. It was hardly one the Council could accept, and there would be an opportunity in another place

Hon. Mr. Shrimski

for making any amendments of the kind. It was not convenient to delay the progress of the Bill at this stage. The amendment, as he understood it, would impose an extreme degree of hardship upon persons in country districts, particularly in the direction of keeping the small shops open; and, if difficulties of the kind were imposed upon the proprietors of these shops, they would be under the necessity of employing in every case a qualified assistant. Difficulties of that nature would be vexatious without compensating advantages being obtained by the public, and might lead to the closing of the shops. The desire to do business simply would be quite a sufficient safeguard. If such safeguard were required, no doubt the Pharmacy Board would endeavour to give effect to what his honourable friend required. He hoped he would withdraw the amendment, and allow the Bill to be read the third time.

Amendment lost, and Bill read the third time.

ELECTORAL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 2.—Commencement of Act.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER moved, *That the further consideration of the clause be postponed.*

The Committee divided.

AYES, 9.

Feldwick	McLean	Taiaroa
Kelly	Rigg	Wahawaha.
Kerr	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.

NOES, 29.

Acland	Jennings	Reynolds
Barnicoat	Johnston	Richardson
Bolt	Mantell	Stevens
Bonar	MacGregor	Stewart
Buckley	McCullough	Swanson
Dignan	Montgomery	Walker, L.
Grace	Oliver	Whitmore
Hart	Ormond	Whyte
Holmes	Pharazyn	Williams.
Jenkinson	Pollen	

Majority against, 20.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY moved, *That after the word "Act," in the tenth line, the following words be inserted, namely: "Provided that no woman, though duly registered as an elector, shall be capable of voting at any election of a member of the House of Representatives until the first day of October, one thousand eight hundred and ninety-four."*

The Committee divided on the question, *"That the words be inserted."*

AYES, 4.

Kelly	Shrimski
Mantell	Swanson.

NOES, 83.

Acland	Feldwick	Johnston
Barnicoat	Grace	Kerr
Bolt	Hart	MacGregor
Bonar	Holmes	McCullough
Buckley	Jenkinson	McLean
Dignan	Jennings	Montgomery

Oliver	Richardson	Wahawaha
Ormond	Rigg	Walker, L.
Pharazyn	Stevens	Walker, W. C.
Pollen	Stewart	Whitmore
Reynolds	Taiaroa	Williams.

Majority against, 29.

Amendment lost.

Clause 3.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER moved to insert the words, "'Absent voter' means any elector who shall have reason to believe that he will be absent from the electoral district where he is registered on the day of election," after the word "requires," in line 4.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words be inserted."

AYES, 18.

Bonar	Mantell	Swanson
Feldwick	McLean	Taiaroa
Grace	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Hart	Richardson	Walker, L.
Holmes	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Shrimski	Whitmore.

NOES, 19.

Aeland	Johnston	Ormond
Barnicoat	Kelly	Pharazyn
Bolt	MacGregor	Pollen
Buckley	McCullough	Stevens
Dignan	Montgomery	Stewart
Jenkinson	Oliver	Williams.
Jennings		

Majority against, 1.

Amendment lost.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at five o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 29th August, 1893.

First Readings—Niramonā Pini Land-grants Bill—Mokihinui and Lyell Auriferous Country—Small-birds Nuisance—Pupil-teachers—Kaihu Railway Timber-trucks—Temuka Park—Local Bodies Roadworks—Bills affecting Local Bodies—Jordan Ford Bridge—Otaki Schoolhouse—"Captain" Kerr—Pukekohe Constable's House—Ironsand—Agricultural Journal—Nine-mile Ferry—Westport Telephone—Electoral Rolls—Post-office Lady Officials—Railway Employes—Thursday Sittings—Rabbit-pest—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—Rating Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Roads Validation Bill, Noxious Weeds (No. 2) Bill.

NIRAMONA PINI LAND-GRANTS BILL.

Mr. MITCHELSON, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was an exact copy of a Bill prepared by Mr. Cadman last year, and that honourable gentleman had intended introducing this measure as a Government Bill; but Mr. Speaker had decided, and, he thought, rightly, that it was a private Bill, and,

as the Standing Orders on Private Bills had not been complied with, the Bill had been postponed until this session. Although the Bill had been upon the Order Paper for a considerable time, the reason why the second reading had not been moved before now was that the Government could not see their way to assist him in the passage of the Bill, inasmuch as the Thermal Springs Act prohibited private persons from holding a freehold. He might say, however, that he had several interviews with the Minister of Lands, and had received his consent to allow the Bill to pass conditionally upon its being so amended when before the Private Bills Committee as to enable Mrs. Graham to hand over the freehold right to the Crown, when the Government would transfer to her a perpetual lease in lieu thereof. The Bill proposed to give effect to the will of Niramonā Pini, as executed on the 8th August, 1881. The title to the piece of land had been adjudicated upon by the Native Land Court, and an order was issued in favour of Niramonā Pini on the 20th of July, 1881; but as the Land Transfer title had not been issued until the 26th of November, 1883, nearly two years after the Thermal Springs Act came into force, and although the title had been antevested, the District Land Registrar refused to register the title to the land. The will had been proved, and probate had been issued in Mrs. Graham's favour by the Supreme Court. The House was now asked to pass the second reading of this Bill simply as an act of justice. As it was never contemplated when the Thermal Springs Act was passed that its effect should be retrospective, and as this was the only piece of land in the district that was in this position, and as it was proposed that the State should acquire the freehold of this land, there could be no serious objection to the passage of the Bill. Therefore he begged to move the second reading.

Mr. W. KELLY understood from what the honourable gentleman had said that there was no other land in the district in a similar position to this. When the Bill was in Committee he would have certain amendments to propose, as he understood there was other land in a similar position, and he would endeavour to get that land included in this Bill. He believed that the Judge of the Native Land Court and a Judge of the Supreme Court had given decisions in this matter, and had stated that, in consequence of the Thermal Springs Act being in force in that district, there was no legal right to will property away. He had no objection to the Bill being read a second time, but when it was in Committee he would take the opportunity of moving amendments in the direction he had indicated.

Bill read a second time.

MOKIHINUI AND LYELL AURIFEROUS COUNTRY.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Minister of Mines, Whether he will this year provide for rendering the auriferous country at the head of the Mokihinui River, and between that river and

Lyell, accessible to miners and others? As the Minister knew, this was a very large district known to be auriferous, and he thought if it were opened up it would prove to be a resource of great value to the colony.

Mr. SEDDON said the Government were doing their best to render the country accessible. What the question meant was twenty miles of road, and the expenditure of £12,000. The matter would be considered by the Government.

SMALL-BIRDS NUISANCE.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Minister of Lands, If he intends making any provision during the present session of Parliament for the compulsory simultaneous action by local bodies for the abating of the small-birds nuisance? He would point out that the local bodies were expected to deal with the question. They had certain powers under the existing law, but there was no provision that he was aware of for compelling them to act simultaneously so as to bring about some effectual remedy of the nuisance. He thought that the Government should either take the matter over altogether, or else have the power to issue a Proclamation calling upon the local bodies to act simultaneously during certain seasons of the year. One local body might expend a considerable sum of money and effect a great deal of good in its own district, but if the adjoining local bodies did not act at the same time the whole thing would be ineffectual.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was understood to say that it was not the intention of the Government to send out any circular this year. One had been sent out last year, but it appeared to him that the local bodies had not acted in so satisfactory a manner as they should have done. He was afraid the local bodies were not doing their duty, but at the same time the Government did not see how they could do anything at the present time.

PUPIL-TEACHERS.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Minister of Education,—(1.) If he does not consider it desirable that there should be a system of annual examination questions for pupil-teachers on the same principle as at present provided for the teachers' and Civil Service examinations, with the view of having a uniform system of examination, and thereby removing the anomalies that exist in our present system; and, if so, will the Minister give effect to this in time for the next annual examination? (2.) If the Minister will modify the pupil-teachers' syllabus, either by diminishing the number of subjects prescribed, or by lowering the standard requirements for a pass, as the present demands on our young teachers are excessive, and calculated to permanently injure their health? As the Minister was aware, at the present time Boards of Education had very large discretionary powers in dealing with the pupil-teachers' syllabus, and that power, to a large extent, was relegated to Inspectors and Secretaries of

the various Boards. It had come under his notice that in the case of several Boards the officials set a very high value on the pupil-teachers' syllabus, and were therefore exacting in their requirements. This was the case in regard to the Otago, North Canterbury, and Wanganui Education Boards; while, on the other hand, it was found that the Inspectors connected with the Westland and Taranaki Boards took a moderate view of the syllabus requirements. In consequence, there was no uniformity whatever in the examinations. In one education district the pupil-teachers were allowed to pass easily, while in another district the examinations were so difficult that many of them were plucked. It had come under his notice that pupil-teachers who failed in passing the fourth-year pupil-teachers' examination had immediately afterwards gone up for a teacher's certificate, and succeeded in passing all the subjects required to take out an E certificate. He wished, therefore, to draw the Minister's attention to the matter, and he would suggest that the same plan should be adopted with reference to pupil-teachers' examinations as was adopted for the examination of school-teachers. In regard to the second part of this question, it was a fact that their young teachers went to school about eight o'clock in the morning, had an hour's preparation, commenced work at nine, continued until twelve, began again at one, and went on until three; then had to stop an hour to help backward scholars. Then they were subject to an hour's teaching, and had generally to take home a number of scholars' examination-papers and school work, which they had to examine, correct, and assess the value of, and in addition had to prepare their own work. Altogether this amounted to about ten hours' work for five days in the week. It might be said they were at liberty on Saturday; but in Canterbury, at any rate, many pupil-teachers took advantage of the trains to go to Christchurch and attend college lectures. He thought, therefore, that at the present time pupil-teachers were excessively overworked.

Mr. REEVES did not know whether he had a right to reply to the full, explicit, and interesting speech delivered by his honourable friend, but, if he had, he would not exercise it, out of regard to the feelings of honourable members. Although the honourable gentleman had spoken rather at length, he was bound to say he agreed with most of what he had said. He wished to put on record his opinion, and that of the department, that the requirements exacted by most of the Education Boards were excessive, especially in the matter of requiring too many subjects in one year in a pupil-teachers' examination. Some six years ago a much more reasonable regulation was drawn up, and had that been adopted by all the Boards he did not think there would have been much complaint at the present time. But, unfortunately, only the Grey and Wellington Boards had adopted it. He would do his best to see whether he could get the Boards to modify the regulations.

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KAIHU RAILWAY TIMBER-TRUCKS.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Minister for Public Works, if he will place a sufficient sum on the estimates to provide timber-trucks on the Kaihu Railway? In asking the question, Mr. Houston was understood to say that the trucks in use at the present time were utterly unfit to carry the kind of timber that was required to be carried. There were large kauri bushes at the head of this railway-line, and it was absolutely necessary that suitable trucks should be provided in order to meet the wants of this important district. If they were provided, large quantities of this valuable timber would be brought down, and this would afford employment to a great many men. He hoped that the Government would comply with this very reasonable request, and thus encourage this important industry in the North.

Mr. SEDDON was understood to say that the matter had been brought under his notice some time ago, and an application had been made for trucks for this purpose. The matter had been represented to the Commissioners, and inquiry was made, and it was found that trucks were available on the Auckland line, where the timber trade was dull, and the Commissioners promised to send some of the trucks up to the Kaihu Railway. He would ask them again, on the representations made by the honourable gentleman, to transfer the trucks so as to meet requirements.

TEMUKA PARK.

Mr. RHODES asked the Minister of Lands, whether he has yet received a report on the petition from Temuka and Arowhenua concerning the Temuka Park? Some six or seven months ago he had presented a petition to Ministers, signed by a large proportion of the inhabitants of the district, asking for a certain inquiry. But nothing had been done so far. He was continually having communications from the inhabitants there, and he would like to know whether the Minister would have something done. The committee there met the other day; and he would read an extract from the letter to him. It was as follows:—

"Perhaps you are not aware that no steps have yet been taken to carry out the wishes expressed in a numerous signed petition, forwarded to you last session, for presentation to the Colonial Secretary, with a view to render the Temuka Park Board an elective body. The last communication received on the subject was from Mr. Marchant, about two months ago, stating that he would shortly visit Temuka and inquire into the matter. We wish to draw your attention to the fact that we have heard nothing further concerning this much-aggravated question; and that it was unanimously resolved at a meeting of the committee, held yesterday, the 23rd instant, that you be immediately communicated with, expressing the general feeling of what seems to have been a most unwarrantable delay in carrying out the wishes expressed in so numerous signed a petition."

He hoped, if the department was too busy to

go into the matter, the Minister would send some other person, so as to have the question settled, as there was a great deal of local feeling on the matter.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said a report had been ordered.

Mr. RHODES said the reason why he wished some one to be sent down was that there was a strong local feeling in the matter.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he thought the Commissioner of Crown Lands in the Canterbury District would be able to report, and he did not suppose that officer had any feeling on the matter.

LOCAL BODIES' ROADWORKS.

Mr. HOUSTON asked the Government, in the event of grants being given for roadworks, if they will arrange that the local bodies entrusted with its expenditure may be able to commence work in the spring, and not, as at present, in the beginning of winter? He asked the question from a sense of its great importance to local bodies. At present the local bodies often had to undertake the works, for which grants were given, in the beginning of winter, when, as a general rule, the money was actually wasted. The rains of winter often destroyed works commenced at a late period of the season. The Minister would confer a great benefit on the local bodies if he could arrange that moneys voted to local bodies might be spent in the beginning of the spring. He trusted the Government would give a favourable reply to this important question.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the roads estimates were usually passed by the House in the month of September; then arrangements had to be made as to the works first to be undertaken. Surveys had to be made, and for some of the works the season might be well advanced before actual formation could be commenced. The expenditure must be spread over the year as nearly as possible in equal monthly instalments. Practically, work was carried on all the year round; but the most economical way was to do the greatest quantity in summer, and that was done whenever practicable.

Mr. HOUSTON.—I refer to grants to local bodies, which have the expenditure of these grants.

BILLS AFFECTING LOCAL BODIES.

Mr. FISH asked the Premier, to explain why he has refused to furnish Mr. T. F. Martin, as secretary to the Municipal Association of New Zealand, with copies of Bills affecting local bodies. The question was almost unnecessary, inasmuch as correspondence had passed between the Premier and Mr. Martin on the subject. But he had put the question with the view of inducing the honourable gentleman, if he could, to reconsider his decision in the matter. Mr. Martin was secretary of what was called the Municipal Association, and as such he represented, he thought, some seventy or eighty Borough Councils and local bodies. In addition to being secretary, he was a lawyer, and on getting these Bills it was a part of his

duties to advise the local bodies on the issues therein contained. It would be a great convenience indeed if that gentleman could be supplied with copies of the Bills—perhaps not so many as asked for—and it would also be of considerable interest to the local bodies. For these reasons, he trusted that the honourable gentleman would reconsider the decision he had already come to. It was quite true that members of Parliament had generally sent such Bills down to the local bodies. Sometimes they had not done so, and sometimes they were sent too late for consideration by the local authorities. At any rate, if the Bills were supplied to Mr. Martin, as requested, they would be sure to reach their proper destination, with advice to the local bodies, which he, as a lawyer, was qualified to give. He hoped the Minister would give him a favourable answer.

Mr. SEDDON said a very large question was involved here with regard to Bills and parliamentary papers being sent to any one, unless the usual custom was followed. So large a number of Bills were requested by Mr. Martin to be supplied to him that the Government could not see their way to grant the request. If the boroughs of the colony were to have a representative to whom Bills and parliamentary papers were to be transmitted, why should not the counties and the Road Boards?—and if each local authority was to have an agent in Wellington for the purpose of distributing Bills, then it meant a very heavy expenditure in printing; and it was taking away from honourable members that which had always obtained—namely, the members' privilege of obtaining Bills and sending them to the local bodies in their districts. He did not know what Mr. Martin had to do with the Bills which he had requested should be sent to him, as they did not all affect Borough Councils, and he did not see by what right he should be supplied with the number of Bills he had asked for.

Mr. FISH would point out to the honourable gentleman that the whole of the Bills except one affected local bodies.

JORDAN FORD BRIDGE.

Mr. BUICK asked the Minister for Public Works, if he will instruct an engineer of the Public Works Department to make a report on the best site for, and an estimate of the cost of, a traffic-bridge over the Awatere River at the Jordan Ford?

Mr. SEDDON said that the first time one of the Government engineers went over to Blenheim he would ask him to make a report as to the best site for constructing this traffic-bridge.

OTAKI SCHOOLHOUSE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister of Education, if the Government will assist the Wellington Education Board by way of a special grant, so that the Board may speedily rebuild the schoolhouse in Otaki, to replace the one which was burnt last week?

Mr. REEVES said this was a matter of

Mr. Fish

underwriting, and was independent of the buildings vote. The Board had been informed that they would receive an amount equal to the value put upon the school and furniture in their return of the estimated value of their school-buildings.

"CAPTAIN" KERR.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister of Justice, What has been done with reference to the case of "Captain" Kerr, of the Salvation Army, who was sentenced to a fine of £3, or one month's hard labour, for playing a cornet in the streets of Milton? He might say that on Saturday morning last he had the honour to present a petition to His Excellency the Governor on this case, and he trusted the Minister would see that that would have the effect of liberating this unfortunate man, who had been imprisoned for simply doing his duty from his religious point of view.

Mr. REEVES was not prepared to admit offhand, as the honourable gentleman asked him to do, that the honourable gentleman's action in presenting a certain petition on Saturday morning had had the effect of causing this unfortunate man to be released from gaol. The man had not been in gaol, was not in gaol then, and might not go to gaol at all. But, apart altogether from the action of his honourable friend in presenting a petition, the Department of Justice had sent to the Resident Magistrate to ask him for a report on the case, and when that report was received the Government would consider what steps they would take in regard to the sentence passed upon the man.

PUKEKOHE CONSTABLE'S HOUSE.

Mr. HAMLIN asked the Minister of Justice, —(1.) If he will consider the advisability of procuring a permanent piece of land at Pukekohe for the purpose of erecting a house thereon as a residence for the local constable? (2.) If he is aware that such a piece of land can now be obtained on very favourable terms adjoining the present Courthouse and lock-up? He desired to point out to the Minister that the present Courthouse and lock-up stood upon a quarter-acre of land, whilst the house in which the constable resided was a considerable distance away from the Courthouse and lock-up, and on occasions when there were several prisoners in the lock-up he had simply to stand on guard all night at the lock-up. The house the constable was living in was in a most dilapidated condition. Daylight could be seen through it; and how he and his wife had got on during the winter he (Mr. Hamlin) was at a loss to know, but he felt assured, if there were not a number of tarpaulins over it, he must have been swamped out. There was a piece of land adjoining the Courthouse and lock-up which the Government had been advised to purchase, and he would call the attention of the Minister to the fact that a new residence for the constable might be erected on this land.

Mr. REEVES did not think it would be

necessary to obtain a piece of land, because there was a Government reserve adjoining the lock-up, and he believed there was sufficient space on it for the erection of a police-station. He would be very happy to take into consideration the question of erecting a station there.

IRONSAND.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Government, If they will obtain a report from the Government officer in Auckland who had charge of the smelting operations when the New Zealand ironsand was worked up into the patent compound of E. Metcalf Smith and smelted to say distinctly if any scrap-iron was used, or ore, or was it compound only; and to report if the iron produced was of a first-class character, fit for all the higher classes of blacksmithing and engineering purposes, equal or superior to the best Swedish or otherwise?

Mr. SEDDON said there was no scrap-iron or other ore used in the ironsand worked up into the compound of E. Metcalf Smith. It was pure and unadulterated, and the iron produced was of first-class quality, and equal to the best European iron.

AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL.

Sir J. HALL asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether it is his intention to take steps for the purpose of issuing periodically a journal or other publication by the Agricultural Department, providing information of value and interest to the agricultural community, and similar to publications issued by the Agricultural Departments in Sydney, Brisbane, and other places? He stated that much useful information on agricultural matters came to this Government, in publications issued by the Australian Governments and that of the United States, which was not accessible to the general public, but which would be very valuable to the farming community. Also, the Government was able, through its officers in different parts of the colony, to collect information as to the condition of crops, spread of pests, disease in stock, and its treatment, and many other subjects of importance to farmers. In several of the Australian Colonies such information was disseminated by an official journal or other periodical publication issued by the Government of the colony. The Minister of Agriculture had been urged to adopt the same course in New Zealand, and, on behalf of the farming community, he (Sir J. Hall) hoped the Minister would see his way to act upon the suggestion.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said this question was entirely one of means. If the House found means for the purpose of doing this work, there would be no difficulty in getting such a journal issued as the honourable gentleman referred to. The department had done a great deal of work in the issuing of pamphlets and so forth, but the issuing of such a journal would require an extra staff to what the department had at the present time of experts, who would be able to put in form such information as would be valuable. They had not got those

experts in the colony. In the colonies the honourable gentleman referred to they had experts for the purpose, and paid them very high salaries. The matter had been under consideration, and, as the honourable gentleman knew, they had been in communication with the Canterbury society with the object of trying to get there a journal issued for the colony, but they had not been able to make satisfactory arrangements. However, they were quite willing to open up fresh correspondence on the subject. If the secretary to the Canterbury society were living in Wellington he did not think there would be very much difficulty in getting this done; but the fact of his being so far distant from Wellington made it very difficult to arrange for the issue of the journal. At any rate, the subject was receiving the consideration of himself and his colleagues, and he hoped that before long they might be able to make satisfactory arrangements in regard to the matter.

NINE-MILE FERRY-WESTPORT TELEPHONE.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Postmaster-General, If he will establish telephone communication between the Nine-mile Ferry and Westport, to obviate the inconvenience resulting to passengers by coach and the travelling public from the stoppage of traffic by floods in the Buller River? It might be well for him to say that at present, very frequently, people came down a distance of twenty miles before they knew whether the river was fordable or not, and when they arrived they found the river in flood, and they had to go back—an occurrence that necessitated very great hardship on people on foot, or on horseback, and travellers by coach. This could be prevented by having telephonic communication established with Westport. He thought the telegraph-lines passed the place, and telephonic connection might easily be made at little expense, so that a message could be sent up and down the river to let the people know exactly the state of the crossing.

Mr. WARD said it was a case that deserved consideration, and he would give instructions to have it done.

ELECTORAL ROLLS.

Mr. O'CONOR asked the Postmaster-General, If he will instruct local Postmasters throughout the colony to report to the Registrar of Electors the names that appear to them improperly upon the roll of their electoral districts? He thought, in the interest of the whole colony, that the honourable gentleman should take some action in this matter. He was informed by several Postmasters both in his district and outside his district that the electoral rolls were not complete as regarded persons living in the neighbourhood, and the names of persons were still on the roll though they had left the district. If the Postmaster-General would instruct the local Postmasters to give information to the Registrar it would lead to the purging of the rolls in a very effective manner.

tual and satisfactory manner all over the colony.

Mr. WARD did not think it would be advisable to agree to this. It would impose a large amount of work on the Postmasters, and, in addition, would bring them into conflict with the people in the localities. While it was desirable that every information possible should be imparted to the people through the Post Office, he did not think it advisable to ask Postmasters to discharge the duties indicated in this question.

POST-OFFICE LADY OFFICIALS.

Mr. LAWRY asked the Postmaster-General, If he will grant to the young ladies in the General Post-offices in the colony the same number of holidays as the young ladies in the Telephone Department obtain?

Mr. WARD did not know what young ladies the honourable gentleman referred to. He might, however, say that the young women in the Accountant's Department of the Post Office received the same holidays as those in the Telephone Exchange. The holidays allowed were a fortnight a year. There was, however, an exception made in the case of the officer in charge of the Auckland Telephone Exchange. He might say that was the only case where a young woman was in charge of a Telephone Exchange in the colony, and, as she was an old servant, and had very responsible duties, she received a month's holiday. Of course, it was a question whether the whole of the women in the department should receive such extended holidays, and at present he did not think they should.

RAILWAY EMPLOYÉS.

On the motion of Mr. DUNCAN, it was ordered, That the Premier do lay before this House a return showing in complete form the names and grades and amounts due to each employé entitled to compensation as retiring-allowance, who were in the railway employ on the Government railways prior to the Commissioners taking charge of such railways; and the names and dates and amounts paid over as compensation since the Railway Commissioners took office.

THURSDAY SITTINGS.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That for the remainder of the session Government business take precedence at half-past seven p.m. on Thursdays.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE thought that in this connection the Premier might have notified that some opportunity would be given to bring forward local Bills.

Mr. SEDDON said this did not touch local Bills. With regard to local Bills, there were always some that were absolutely required, and assistance was given by the Government to get them through. The usual courtesy would be extended to Bills of that class.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE suggested that the course adopted some years ago should be followed, and the Bills referred to a Committee, to

recommend the Bills that were necessary to go through, and which, perhaps, did not include any very debatable points.

Mr. FISH said that the question considered by the Committee was not whether the Bills contained debatable matter or not; but the Bills that were opposed, and that were so notified to the Committee, were placed at the bottom of the list.

Dr. NEWMAN said there was another class of Bills necessary—the Bills brought forward by private members. One or two of these Bills had passed the Upper House. He might instance the Pharmacy Bill. He hoped the Premier would offer facilities for passing those Bills.

Mr. ROLLESTON trusted the Premier would tell them what he really meant to do with regard to the congested state of the Order Paper. They had already eighty-six Bills on the Order Paper, and they were still coming. They had just got the Noxious Weeds Bill No. 2, and Bills were coming down every day. It was time they knew really what business they were going to be called upon to take in hand. It was utterly impossible for members to know what business to get up before coming to the House, when there was such a mass of stuff in their file of papers. It was entirely impossible to make themselves masters of anything but a very small proportion of it; and at this stage of the session, when every day was taken for Government business, they ought to know what they were expected to do.

Mr. WRIGHT would like to ask whether the Premier would not extend the same courtesy to Bills that were not local Bills, but that were of more importance than many of the local Bills.

Mr. WILLIS hoped the course suggested by the honourable member for Clutha would be adopted. There was one Bill relating to his own district which was not likely to be opposed. It was a question of the Natives preventing works going on on the Wanganui River, which works were an absolute necessity, because another steamer was to be placed on the river to open up the traffic connecting with the main road, and if the Bill was not passed the owner of the steamer absolutely refused to order the other boat. The Natives had shown a good deal of disposition to stop the work on the river, and this Bill was simply brought forward so as to get the river opened for traffic.

Mr. SEDDON said the course that had been suggested with regard to local Bills by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) was correct. When a certain number of honourable members signified to the Committee their intention of opposing certain Bills these were put lower on the Order Paper, and the Bills that were not opposed were formally passed. However, it seemed scarcely fair to leave it in the hands of two or three honourable members to object to a Bill going through, and he thought there would be an opportunity later on of going on with the necessary local Bills. At the request of the honourable member for Ellesmere, who had been acting in the absence of the leader of the Opposition, he had notified

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to the House the course of business, and, if they looked at the Order Paper, they would see that it was in accordance with what he had told the House. He would like to see honourable members, figuratively speaking, take their coats off and go to work, so that they might get some Bills passed. Some of the Bills had been before Parliament for several sessions, and, if legislation was required in the interests of the country, honourable members should face it, and, if they disagreed with the policy of the measures, the proper course was not to block the Bills, but to go into Committee upon them and there amend them, so as to make them as perfect as possible. So far, honourable members had not shown that desire to work that he would like to see.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON objected that this was, in reply, bringing in new controversial matter.

Mr. SEDDON said he had not been allowed to complete his sentence. He did not mean that they had not worked, but that, so far as the passing of the Bills was concerned, they had not passed many. At all events, he hoped that they would do good work during the present week, and at the end of it he would make a statement as to what Bills the Government intended going on with.

Motion agreed to.

RABBIT-PEST.

Mr. J. McKENZIE moved, That all matters referring to the rabbit nuisance be referred to the Agricultural, Pastoral, and Stock Committee.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished the honourable gentleman would give some intimation to the House of what he proposed to do with regard to the spread of the rabbit-pest in South Canterbury. He lived in that part of the country, and the reports he heard of the spread of the pest were very alarming. He ventured to think that the administration of the lands was to a large extent responsible for the spread of the rabbits.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—No.

Mr. ROLLESTON thought he was not wrong in stating that the way in which the land had been cut up and distributed had tended to a large extent to allow of the spread of the pest. But, whether that was so or not, he would ask the honourable gentleman to allay the strong feeling there was in that part of the country by stating that he was going to grapple with this difficulty in some practical way, because there was no doubt that the last two seasons had been very bad seasons for the spread of rabbits, in consequence of the dry weather, and that the rabbits were coming over new country. His own belief was that the productive power of a huge tract of country beginning at the Waitaki and spreading up the back country would be largely decreased. He hoped the Minister of Agriculture would not allow this session to pass without asking authority, which he was sure the House would give him, to deal with this question in a thorough and efficient manner.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the honourable gentleman was not present the other day when he (Mr. McKenzie), went fully into this matter of the spread of the rabbit-pest in South Canterbury. He had stated then that the rabbits had crossed the boundary on which the fence was erected before the erection of the fence. The people were warned time after time that they must take every precaution and care to keep down the rabbits. The Government were accused of all sorts of things in the leading articles in South Canterbury papers. One leader had been sent to him the other day in which there was not a word of truth from beginning to end. They were accused of taking men away from there, in face of the fact that an extra Inspector had been sent to the district. And the greatest obstacle in the way of the Inspectors doing their duty was caused by these very men who told the honourable gentleman that the rabbit-pest was spreading. If the honourable gentleman made inquiries at the department he would find that the very men who had been crying out about getting local control over the rabbits had been in Court time after time for having rabbits themselves. In place of assisting the Inspector to do his duty, they neglected their duty. There was a case which was brought before them the other day, in which a man was concerned who held a large area of country—some twenty or twenty-two thousand acres—and who made the greatest possible noise about the rabbits; yet, when the Inspector went to this man's place, he found that he had only two men and a boy on that large area of country to do the work. The only thing the Government could do was to enforce the law and make these people do their duty. He was going to do that, and then the honourable gentleman would hear from these people of how arbitrary and wrong-headed the Minister of Lands was, because he was doing his duty. The honourable gentleman accused the land-administration of being responsible for the spread of rabbits in South Canterbury. It was nothing of the sort. The land-administration of the Government had been to break up these large runs, which had been the great feeders for rabbits in that portion of the country, and he contended that if they put five or six small sheep-farmers on land that had been occupied before by simply a station-manager and two shepherds, there was a better chance of keeping down the rabbits than before. That was exactly what was being done, and what had been done, with regard to the country which the honourable gentleman spoke of: so that, when the honourable gentleman said that the administration of the Lands Department had been the cause of the increase of the rabbits in South Canterbury he would say that there was not one tittle of truth in the statement. The Committee had taken considerable evidence on this subject, and could take more. He could get them reports from competent officers, who would show beyond a doubt that the very men who made the greatest noise were the greatest sinners themselves; and not

only that, but they had got up a plot with the view of getting down the rents in the district, and they were making the rabbit nuisance an excuse for getting the rents reduced. They had applied to the Canterbury Land Board for a reduction in their rents, and on each occasion they had been told that they must carry out their contract. No doubt the rabbits were going to be made a stalking-horse of for the purpose of getting the rents reduced. He would take care that instructions were issued that the rabbit-pest should be put down in South Canterbury, if the law at the present time was such as enabled that to be done.

Motion agreed to.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

Mr. SEDDON.—I move, That this Bill be recommitted, for the purpose of considering the amendments set forth in Order Papers Nos. 29 and 31. It is not necessary to go into each of the separate clauses. The Bill has been carefully gone through, and it has been found that certain amendments are necessary. For instance, "The Regulation of Elections Act, 1881," is mentioned in the Bill, and we were advised that under the Interpretation Act, notwithstanding that Act has been repealed, it will cover it. The honourable member for Manukau raised the question, and on going into it I found that this is not an amendment of the Regulation of Elections Act—that it is a measure dealing with another subject—and that that section of the Interpretation Act will not apply; and therefore it will be necessary to put in clearly and explicitly that the formation of these rolls shall not be as provided by "The Regulation of Elections Act, 1881," but under any electoral laws for the time being in force. I do not think I need go into all of the amendments, but when the Bill is in Committee I will explain them as we come to them.

Mr. SWAN.—Before this Bill goes into Committee I wish to say that I shall, in Committee, move to strike out clause 19. I may here say I am entirely opposed to it. It seems to me that it is a serious interference with useful institutions—institutions which are doing a very great deal of good. I more particularly refer to *bond fide* working-men's clubs—institutions that are doing, socially and intellectually, a great deal of useful work. I refer to what may be called a model club—that is, our Napier Working-men's Club, which possesses a membership of about eight hundred. They have a reference and circulating library of over four thousand volumes, which is open to members and members' wives and children. They have also a lecture-hall and a concert-hall, where lectures are periodically given, and where free entertainments are also given. I say that institutions of this kind ought not to be hampered or harassed by the same provisions as licensed houses are subject to. I may further state that, although I voted on the last occasion for this clause, I did so through inadvertence, and under misconception. I have

always been against this clause, and shall strive my utmost to have it expunged altogether. I will not take up the time of the House, but I do hope—although I fear that it is rather hoping in vain—that this obnoxious clause will be struck out altogether.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I propose to add to the proposal of the Premier the words, "and for the consideration of amendments on Supplementary Order Paper No. 28." Will the Premier assent to that?

Mr. SEDDON.—I have no objection to 15A.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Then, I shall move the amendments separately. I move to recommit clause 15 for the purpose of striking out subclauses (3) and (4), and the proviso at the end of the clause, with the view of inserting in lieu thereof the provisions set out on Supplementary Order Paper No. 28, with the corrections I have noted thereon. If the Government object, I cannot hope, of course, that this will be carried, but I will take the opportunity, just in two or three words, to point out the objects of the proposed amendment. By getting rid of the proviso at the end of the clause we should relieve subclauses (1) and (2), which deal with the question of continuing the number of licensed houses as at present, and the question of reducing the number, from the rider as to one-half being necessary to vote, and thus leave the carrying of these questions to an absolute majority of those actually voting; and by the amendment proposed in subclause (3) we should substitute for three-fifths, the total number of votes recorded as necessary to carry prohibition, a majority of those on the roll; and should further require that the Committee shall distribute over a three years' term the extinguishment of the licenses in a district, so as to mitigate the severity of the change. A sudden change, I think, would not be desirable in the interests of property or of good government. I do not purpose saying any more on the subject at present, but beg to move the amendment standing in my name.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added to the question be so added."

AYES, 22.

Allen	Kapa	Taipua
Duthie	Lake	Tanner
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, T.	Wilson
Fergus	Meredith	Wright.
Hall	Moore	
Hall-Jones	Newman	Tellers.
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	Hutchison, G.
Joyce	Saunders	Mills, J.

NOES, 37.

Blake	Fraser	McLean
Buchanan	Hogg	Mills, C. H.
Buckland	Houston	O'Connor
Cadman	Kelly, J.	Palmer
Carncross	Kelly, W.	Reeves
Carroll	Mackintosh	Rhodes
Duncan	McGowan	Rolleston
Fish	McKenzie, J.	Russell

Mr. J. McKenzie

Sandford	Taylor	Willis.
Seddon	Thompson, R.	
Smith, E. M.	Thompson, T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Smith, W. C.	Valentine	Buick
Swan	Ward	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	McGuire
Harkness	Dawson
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Guinness
Richardson	Parata
Stout.	Mitchelson.

Majority against, 15.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—I beg now to propose that the new clause on Supplementary Order Paper No. 28 be added.

Mr. SEDDON.—I accept that amendment; otherwise there is no provision made in the Bill for giving the second vote on the question of whether there are to be any licenses granted or not.

Amendment agreed to.

On the question, That the Bill be recommitted to consider the amendments in the name of Mr. Seddon on Supplementary Order Paper Nos. 29 and 31, and in the name of Mr. G. Hutchison on Supplementary Order Paper No. 28,

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said,—I wish to propose this amendment, and if the Premier does not accept it I am not going to divide the House upon it. At the same time I think it is an amendment which will commend itself to every member of the House. It is as follows: "The provisions of any Act giving shop-assistants a half-holiday shall apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to publichouses, the assistants in which shall have a half-holiday simultaneously with shop-assistants."

Mr. SEDDON.—I do not accept that amendment. I think notice ought to have been given of it. It is a surprise upon members. It is a very important amendment, and is a proper clause for the Shop-hours Bill, and would be out of place in this Bill.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I think the honourable member did well in moving this amendment, and I hope he will take a division of the House upon this important question.

Mr. SEDDON.—Endeavour, if you like, to put it in the Shop-hours Bill.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I think we are not sure that that Bill is going to become law. We have the "twelve apostles" in the Upper House, and we are not quite so sure that the Bill will become law.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I think, Sir—

Mr. SEDDON.—Oh, do please let us get on with the Bill!

Mr. FERGUS.—Sit down.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I should like to ask the honourable member for Wakatipu what he means by saying, "Sit down." I will not stand any of your impertinence.

Mr. SPEAKER.—You must withdraw that expression.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Then, Sir, I ask you to ask

the honourable member for Wakatipu to withdraw what he said in telling me to sit down.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman made no remark of the kind so far as I heard. I understood that it was the Premier who requested the honourable member to sit down.

Mr. SEDDON.—I must say the honourable member for Christchurch City is correct. I think the honourable member for Wakatipu did say, "Sit down." It is a misunderstanding.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Then, I ask the honourable member for Wakatipu, did he not tell me to sit down? I am not going to be bounced in that way at all. I only meant to say two or three words, and to intimate that this is a proper amendment to go into the Shop-hours Bill, and if it does I shall support it.

Mr. FERGUS.—It is perfectly true that when the Premier interrupted the honourable gentleman, and told him, "Oh, don't! don't!" I said, "Sit down." If the honourable gentleman would sit down a great deal more than he does it would be good for himself, and be for the benefit of the House and the country; but he takes it into his head to get up upon every occasion, and make an exhibition of the New Zealand Parliament to the world.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Order, order.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must withdraw those words.

Mr. FERGUS.—I do withdraw them, of course. I always bow to your ruling. Sometimes the honourable gentleman gets the House in a most laughable mood and we cannot get on with the work. That is what I meant, when the Premier wanted to get the Bill into Committee as soon as possible, and I simply echoed what the Premier said, "Oh! sit down."

Mr. W. HUTCHISON.—I am very glad of the expression of opinion which has been given with regard to my proposed amendment, and I shall take an opportunity of adding it to the Shops and Shop-assistants Bill. I will therefore withdraw it.

Leave to withdraw the amendment refused.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I wish to ask the Premier whether he will include the whole of clause 3A for recommitment. It will be remembered that the other night it was held that the action on the part of the Premier was wrong in this matter. It would involve two rolls. I wish to know if it is competent for us to amend any part of that clause, because it will have to be amended to make sense of it where there is no sense now.

Mr. SEDDON.—It will take some little time to discuss the matter. I will therefore accept the recommitment of the whole of clause 3A.

Mr. MOORE.—I would suggest that we should recommit clause 6, in order to strike out the proviso in subsection (5), which reads as follows: "A Committee shall be deemed not to have been elected in any case where the whole number of such Committee is not elected." The Governor has power to appoint when a Committee has not been elected, and

this subsection simply means that, in case a sufficient number of Committeemen were not elected, the Governor would have to appoint the whole nine. I think that, on the face of it, this is absurd, and that, in such a case as I have mentioned, it should merely be provided that the Governor should have power to appoint the number of committeemen that were required to make up the necessary number.

Mr. SEDDON.—That is the course generally followed at present, and I do not see that there would be any difficulty.

Mr. MOORE.—Then, I ask that this clause be recommitted, so that it may be provided that the Governor shall appoint in case an insufficient number is elected. It is quite clear that under the Bill as it stands the Governor has power to appoint the whole of the Committee in case of such a difficulty as I have indicated, instead of merely filling up the vacancies. I think we should therefore recommit the clause, in order to carry out the intention of the House.

Mr. SEDDON.—I see no necessity to recommit that section. It has been very fully considered. If the County Council of a district was to divide the county into ridings, and there was to be a member elected to represent each riding, this difficulty would be met; but there must, as the Bill stands, be nine candidates or it will be no election. If there be not a proper complement of candidates, then there will be no election. There must be a sufficient number of candidates to fill up the seats. Under the present Licensing Act the Governor takes this power, and gazettes the names of persons to fill up the vacancies. However, I will consider the matter, and, if necessary, afford an opportunity for its further consideration by honourable members. I do not think we need recommit the Bill for that purpose.

Mr. O'CONOR.—Should I be in order in asking that the proposed new clause in Supplementary Order Paper No. 80 be included with those which are to be dealt with in Committee? In clause 18 of the Bill we have provided that if the license is taken away the loss shall fall entirely on the landlord, and it seems to me that it is quite unfair it should be so. All that my proposed new clause provides is that, in case of a conviction for a breach of the Act being indorsed upon the license, then the landlord, the owner of the property, may protect his property and cancel the lease held by the offending lessee. If something of the kind is not done it will leave men who have property in hotels at the mercy of any unscrupulous tenant who may take it into his head to try to levy blackmail upon the owner, by threatening to so conduct the business as to endanger the license, and, if the owner will not submit, the license may be taken away through the lessee's fault. The proposal contained in the new clause is that, in case a conviction is indorsed upon the license, the landlord or owner of the property shall have it at his option to terminate the lease. It is a very fair proposal, and will have the effect of protecting persons who have hotels and have leased them

to other persons. I beg to move, therefore, That this proposed new clause be included.

Mr. FISH.—There may be one objection to that, and perhaps a serious one. It is this: If the law remains as it is it becomes incumbent on the part of the owner of the property to see that he gets a respectable man as tenant. Now, if this safeguard to him is inserted in the Act, he may place his house temporarily in the hands of a hireling, or he may be induced to accept a man as tenant without taking care to see that he has a good a character as he ought to have, and, if he finds by the operation of this clause he can get rid of his tenant at any moment, I think it would be a rather serious thing. I do not object to the clause going into Committee, but I do not say that I will support it.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I am quite willing that it should be restricted merely to those tenancies which have been created previous to the passing of the Act.

Mr. SEDDON.—I may say there is a great danger in this clause. What honourable members desire is to make the owners of licensed premises responsible to a much greater extent than they have been in the past. Now, this proposed new clause would simply mean that a tenant might, until detected, carry on his house in a very disorderly way. He might be convicted once or twice; and as soon as the second conviction is recorded on the license the landlord would give him notice of the termination of the lease, and would get another tenant. That is practically what has been done in the past.

Mr. RHODES.—Three convictions would upset the license.

Mr. SEDDON.—The landlord would not run the chance of three convictions. He might allow the tenant to continue in occupation until two convictions had been recorded, but he would not risk the third. It is always a rule in all hotel licenses that the landlord reserves to himself the right, if the tenant is not conducting the house as it ought to be conducted, of declaring the lease void and re-entering. That is always one of the conditions of the lease.

Mr. RHODES.—The Premier does not seem to see that it does not matter which tenant makes the breach. If even a different tenant from those previously convicted makes a third breach the license has then to go altogether. The landlord is not relieved of the responsibility, when two breaches have been committed, by getting rid of the lessee who has committed those breaches of the law. If a third breach is committed, the license is absolutely taken away.

Mr. DUTHIE.—I trust the Premier will stand firm to this clause of the Bill. The proposal introduced by the honourable member for Heathcote seems to go to the root of the evil, and makes the owner of the property, the person who reaps the fruits of the system in exorbitant rents, really responsible. No doubt the degradation to a class of houses arises mainly from those houses being let to tenants

Mr. Moore

who have very little to lose, and who are prepared to run the gauntlet of the law by selling all the drink they can, and when at last a conviction is recorded against them such a tenant is simply turned out and another put in. That has thrown discredit on the whole trade, and it is far better that the landlords should be responsible for the good conduct of their houses and for the good conduct of their tenants. I hope that the House will not trifle with this question. It is an important step in advance, the one step which commends the Bill to me, and gives me hope that it will tend to promote the cause of temperance. I hope, therefore, the Premier will not agree to the proposal of the honourable member for the Buller.

Mr. TANNER.—I believe the amendment contained in this clause proposed to be introduced by the honourable member for the Buller will be found undesirable, and one of the most dangerous clauses that could possibly be inserted in the Bill. It seems to me to reverse the whole principle of what should be a good Licensing Bill. I do not say that it reverses the principle of this Bill, because I am not of opinion that it is a satisfactory measure, but, at any rate, this would be an extremely dangerous addition, and I trust it will be resisted by honourable members.

Mr. ALLEN.—I really do not see the objection to this clause. It is perfectly justifiable to make the licensee responsible for the good conduct of the house, just as much as the owner, and, if the licensee breaks the law, the owner ought to have the power to say, "I will have a good tenant." That is just what we have been doing, and I do not see why it should not be the case here. We do not get over clause 16 of the Bill by this. If the license is indorsed with three convictions, then the license itself goes. It seems to me that the clause ought to be put in.

Mr. J. MILLS.—I think this provision will lead to the owner of the hotel protecting himself in the conditions of the lease. He will make it a condition that if a conviction is indorsed upon the license the lease shall terminate. I think we should throw some of the responsibility on the proprietor—the same responsibility that he has at the present time.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. MEREDITH.—I wish to move, That the 7th subsection of clause 10 be reconsidered, for the purpose of striking it out.

The House divided on the question, "That subsection (7) of clause 10 be reconsidered."

AYES, 21.

Allen	Lake	Taipua
Buick	Mackenzie, T.	Tanner
Earnshaw	Moore	Willis
Fisher	Newman	Wright.
Hall-Jones	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	Meredith
Joyce	Saunders	Sandford.
Kelly, W.		

NOES, 26.

Blake	Buckland	Carroll
Buchanan	Carncross	Duncan

Fish	McLean	Swan
Fraser	Mills, C. H.	Taylor
Hutchison, G.	Mills, J.	Thompson, T.
Kelly, W.	Rhodes	Ward.
Mackintosh	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
McGowan	Seddon	Hogg
McKenzie, J.	Smith, E. M.	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	McGuire
Harkness	Dawson
Mitchelson	Fergus
Parata	Richardson
Stout.	Mackenzie, M. J. S.

Majority against, 5.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. McLEAN.—I move, That clause 15 be recommitted, for the purpose of amending the latter portion of subsection (4). Under that clause, in taking a vote for the reduction of licenses, or keeping them as they are, a majority of the whole of the people on the roll is required. I desire that it should be a majority only of those who vote.

Amendment negatived.

Captain RUSSELL.—I move to recommit the whole of clause 19. There are a great number of persons who frequent clubs and take their meals at them who are not technically boarders, although they practically are so. And there is another point which, I think, may lead to confusion. I do not believe it is possible to treat many clubs as hotels, for this reason: that the club is the private property of the members, and each member has a right to say that he is living in his own house, and consequently at liberty to do as he chooses therein.

The House divided on the question, "That clause 19 be recommitted, for the purpose only of making the amendment contained on the Supplementary Order Paper."

AYES, 38.

Blake	Joyce	Sandford
Buchanan	Kelly, J.	Saunders
Buick	Kelly, W.	Seddon
Cadman	Lawry	Smith, E. M.
Carncross	Mackintosh	Tanner
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Duncan	McLean	Thompson, T.
Earnshaw	Meredith	Ward
Fraser	Moore	Willis
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Wright.
Houston	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Pinkerton	Hogg
Hutchison, W.	Reeves	Mills, C. H.

NOES, 17.

Allen	Lake	Swan
Buckland	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Duthie	Newman	Wilson.
Fergus	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Fish	Rolleston	Mills, J.
Fisher	Shera	Russell.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	McGuire
Harkness	Dawson
Mitchelson	Kapa
Parata	Richardson
Stout.	Mackenzie, M. J. S.

Majority for, 21.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. SANDFORD.—I move, That clause 19 be recommitted, for the purpose of considering lines 5 and 6.

Mr. SEDDON.—I have no objection to allow that to go. A large number of members have represented to me that they want to reconsider this question.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—What is this question?

Mr. SEDDON.—The question of closing the clubs at eleven o'clock.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I hope the House will not agree to this, because it is simply a proposal to allow one class of persons to sell without being bound down to certain hours, while another class are. It seems to me to be perfectly unjust to say that any club in the colony shall be allowed to keep open on Sundays for the sale of liquor, and it is atrocious that the publichouses should be closed throughout the country on Sundays and on other days at certain specified hours, while clubs are allowed to retail liquor at all hours and on Sundays. It is not for the good of those who frequent these clubs, and it is certainly to the injury of the public. Regulations for the control of the sale of liquor in publichouses are made in the interests of the many, and it is to the interests equally of the persons who frequent these clubs that the clubs should be regulated in a similar manner. There are hotels in the colony as well conducted as any clubs are, and yet they are subjected to these restrictions. A great many of the clubs in this colony have not even the excuse that they are selling to a boarder or a person staying in the house. The business consists entirely of the sale of grog and the amusements connected with it. Is it right to give them this privilege, in face of the great strictness which is shown with regard to the conduct of publichouses? If the House consents to this it will be passing legislation of the worst class. I shall be tempted to go against the third reading of the Bill if such a thing as this is done.

Mr. FISH.—It is amazing to me to hear a gentleman who is presumably possessed of common-sense make such remarks as have just fallen from the honourable member for the Buller. In what respect can clubs be likened to publichouses? The honourable gentleman knows that in one case liquor can be supplied to any one who comes within the doors, but in the case of clubs no one can get served there except members of the club, or intimate friends, and even then only at the expense of their member friends. There is no parallel between the two cases at all. I consider nothing can be gained by attempting to get claptrap popularity in saying we should

restrict clubs just the same as publichouses. There is no reason at all in such talk. I am amazed that we should hear such sentiments as these from a gentleman like the honourable member for the Buller, who ought to know and does know better.

Mr. SEDDON.—I did not think the main question would have been considered on this motion. Had I thought so I would not have accepted it. Exception is taken as regards the privileges given under certain cases, and as there is a doubt, though I have no doubt myself, I agreed to accept the proposal, so as to set that doubt at rest in Committee.

The House divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added regarding matters to be reconsidered in clause 19 be so added."

AYES, 34.

Allen	Lawry	Shera
Blake	Mackintosh	Swan
Buchanan	McGowan	Taipua
Buckland	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Cadman	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Carncross	Mills, J.	Willis
Carroll	Palmer	Wilson
Duncan	Pinkerton	Wright.
Duthie	Rhodes	
Fisher	Rolleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Russell	Fish
Lake	Seddon	Sandford.

NOES, 18.

Buick	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Earnshaw	Meredith	Tanner
Fraser	Moore	Taylor.
Hall-Jones	O'Conor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Saunders	Hutchison, G.
Hutchison, W.	Smith, E. M.	Kelly, J.
Mackenzie, T.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	McGuire
Dawson	Harkness
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Stout
Parata	Richardson
Reeves.	Joyce.

Majority for, 16.

Words added.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I move, That clause 15 be recommitted, for the purpose of striking out the last seven lines.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'the last seven lines of clause 15' be added to the question."

AYES, 20.

Allen	Meredith	Taipua
Buick	Mills, J.	Tanner
Earnshaw	Moore	Wilson
Fisher	Palmer	Wright.
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Sandford	Hutchison, G.
McLean	Saunders	Kelly, J.

NOES, 32.

Blake	Buckland	Carncross
Buchanan	Cadman	Carroll

Duncan	Mackintosh	Smith, E. M.
Duthie	McGowan	Swan
Fish	McKenzie, J.	Taylor
Hogg	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Houston	Rhodes	Ward
Kapa	Rolleston	Willis.
Kelly, W.	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Seddon	Fraser
Mackenzie, T.	Shera	Lawry.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	McGuire
Fergus	Mitchelson
Harkness	Dawson
Joyce	Reeves
Parata	Richardson
Stout.	Mackenzie, M. J. S.

Majority against, 12.

Amendment lost.
Bill recommitted.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 19.—Clubs to be subject to all provisions of Licensing Acts.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the words "including the Parliamentary Bellamy's" be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 24.

Buchanan	Lake	Rhodes
Buckland	Mackenzie, M.	Saunders
Buick	Mackenzie, T.	Taylor
Carncross	McLean	Thompson, T.
Earnshaw	Meredith	Wilson.
Fisher	Mitchelson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	O'Connor	Lawry
Hutchison, W.	Palmer	Newman.
Kelly, W.		

NOES, 31.

Allen	Kapa	Smith, E. M.
Blake	Mackintosh	Swan
Bruce	McGowan	Tanner
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Carroll	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Duncan	Pinkerton	Willis
Duthie	Rolleston	Wright.
Fraser	Russell	
Hall	Sandford	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Seddon	Fish
Houston	Shera	Kelly, J.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Harkness	Dawson
Parata	Richardson
Reeves	McGuire
Stout.	Guinness.

Majority against, 7.

Words struck out.

Mr. SANDFORD moved to strike out the words, "to the closing of bars at eleven o'clock *post meridiem* daily, and in regard to Sunday trading to the indorsement of licenses."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

	AYES, 14.	
Buick	Hutchison, G.	Taipua
Carncross	Hutchison, W.	Taylor.
Earnshaw	Mackenzie, T.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall	Moore	Kelly, J.
Hall-Jones	Smith, E. M.	Tanner.

NOES, 43.

Allen	Lake	Russell
Blake	Lawry	Sandford
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Saunders
Buchanan	McGowan	Seddon
Buckland	McKenzie, J.	Shera
Cadman	McLean	Smith, W. C.
Carroll	Meredith	Swan
Duncan	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, R.
Duthie	Mills, J.	Valentine
Fish	Newman	Ward
Fraser	O'Connor	Willis.
Hogg	Pinkerton	
Houston	Reeves	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kapa	Rhodes	Wilson
Kelly, W.	Rolleston	Wright.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Harkness	Dawson
Palmer	Fergus
Parata	Richardson
Stout.	Guinness.

Majority against, 29.

Words struck out.

Mr. O'CONOR moved, That the words "relating to the sale of liquors during unauthorised hours" be inserted after the word "thereof," in subsection (1), line 4, page 18.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 25.

Blake	Lawry	Smith, W. C.
Carncross	Mackenzie, T.	Taipua
Duncan	Meredith	Tanner
Earnshaw	Mitchelson	Taylor
Hall	Moore	Wright.
Hall-Jones	Pinkerton	
Hogg	Saunders	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, W.	Seddon	Buick
Kelly, J.	Smith, E. M.	O'Connor.

NOES, 32.

Allen	Lake	Sandford
Bruce	Mackenzie, M.	Shera
Buchanan	McGowan	Swan
Cadman	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, R.
Carroll	McLean	Valentine
Duthie	Mills, C. H.	Ward
Fish	Newman	Willis
Fraser	Reeves	Wilson.
Houston	Rhodes	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kapa	Rolleston	Buckland
Kelly, W.	Russell	Hutchison, G.

Majority against, 7.

Amendment negatived.

Bill reported.

Mr. SEDDON.—I move, formally, That the Bill be read a third time; and I will then agree to adjourn the debate.

Debate adjourned.

RATING BILL.

Mr. WARD.—Sir, this is an important Bill, and, recognising it to be an important Bill, and one which I have every reason to believe honourable members on both sides of the House will desire to make a good and useful Rating Bill in every possible way, I propose, after the second reading, to refer it to a special Committee; and, in addition to its being referred to a special Committee for considering some of the important portions of the measure, I propose that that part which specially relates to Native affairs be referred to the Native Affairs Committee. I may, perhaps, indicate to honourable members the members of the Select Committee it is intended to refer this Bill to. I will propose, after having explained the provisions of the Bill, to refer it to a Committee consisting of the Premier, Sir John Hall, Mr. Cadman, Captain Russell, Mr. Fish, Mr. T. Thompson, Mr. Mitchelson, Mr. J. Kelly, and the mover; and, as I have said, the portions relating to the rating of Native land to the Native Affairs Committee. I hope that, having made that announcement to the House, any criticisms, or any extreme criticisms, that any honourable members may deem it necessary to make upon this Bill will be deferred until after it has come back from these Committees. This Bill proposes some important changes in connection with local rating. For the first time in the history of the colony a proposal is made to make Native lands contribute their fair rate of taxation. It is not intended, as honourable members will notice, in an important departure of this kind to make this by any means general in its application; and I may say that exceptions are made with a view of enabling this taxation to fall easily upon those Natives who will be affected under this Bill. It may be more convenient, when I come to that portion of the Bill, to explain in detail as to how it is proposed to rate Native lands. The Bill also provides for rating on unimproved values. There have been many representations made from various localities in this country that a provision should be put in the Rating Act to enable, under certain conditions, local bodies to assess their rates upon the basis of unimproved values. I am fully aware that this is a matter upon which a diversity of opinion exists, but I have every reason to believe that the majority of those who are concerned are largely in favour of a change such as that indicated in this Bill. It will also be noticed that it is proposed in this Bill that for the future local bodies shall make their own assessments. Honourable members will, I think, see that this is a necessary result of the changes proposed in this measure. I may briefly refer to the various clauses of the Bill, and explain them as I proceed. Clause 2 provides that, from and after the commencement of this Act, the Commissioner of Taxes shall not supply valuation-rolls to local bodies. Each local body shall make its own valuation only. Subclause (1) repeals certain provisions of the Rating Acts, the repeal of which is necessary in consequence of the change indicated

in clause 2. Subclause (2) provides that the valuation-roll made by the Council of any county shall be the standard roll from which the valuation-rolls of all local bodies having rating-power within such county shall be framed, and I may say an exception is made so far as regards town districts. It is provided that the Clerk of the county shall supply rolls to the local bodies that require them, very much, I may say, in the same manner as the Commissioner of Taxes now supplies rolls to local bodies. This arrangement, it will be seen, will prevent more than one valuation from being in force within any one part of the colony. The County Council will be allowed to make a reasonable charge for the cost of copying rolls supplied to the local bodies. Subclause (3) provides that, where the Counties Act is not in force, valuation-rolls made by Road Boards shall be the standard rolls for rating. Subclause (4) provides that, where any special rate is to be levied upon some part only of a district or subdivision of a district, the roll shall be compiled from the valuation-rolls of the district or districts affected, as the case may be. Subclause (5) provides that the assessment of properties under this clause shall be made in accordance with the Rating Act of 1876, or the Rating Act of 1882, and as on the annual value or actual value, according to which of the two Acts may be in force in the district. Subclause (6) repeals certain provisions for assessing the pastoral lands of the Crown. These, I may say, were assessed on the rental capitalised at 6 per cent. per annum. In future, such lands will be assessed on the actual value. Clause 3 makes the dates for delivery and inspection of valuation-lists a month later than at present.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What is that for?

Mr. WARD.—That has been found to be desirable. Representations have been made from the various public bodies which are affected, and which suggest that this would be a more convenient and better time than under the existing Act. Clause 4 makes provision for enabling the occupier of premises in a borough, held for a term less than one month, to become the occupier within the meaning of the Act, and to have his name placed on the valuation-list. This, of course, I may say, has to be done only with the consent of the owner. Clause 5 makes provision for enabling the local body to have two Reviewers to sit as Judges of the Assessment Court. Such Reviewers will take no part, I may say, in determining any question coming before the Court, other than the question of value. The local body will pay the Reviewers such fees as may be determined by the Governor. Clause 6 provides that one rate-book may contain several rates. That will be of considerable use in the way of saving heavy work in compiling rate-books. Clause 7 provides for the valuation-roll and rate-book being evidence of their contents without proof of the signatures of the persons who appear to have signed the roll or rate-book, or of the official character of such persons. Clause 8 provides that when judg-

ment for rates is recorded against any land no further instrument shall be registered against such land until that judgment has been satisfied. This really makes a claim for rates a prior claim. That, I think, will be generally conceded, in view of the past experience of many public bodies throughout this country, as essential, and, in fact, as very desirable. Clause 9 provides that, where rates remain unpaid for more than three months, 10 per cent. per annum interest shall be charged after the expiration of three months. This, I think, those interested in public bodies will probably consider should meet with acceptance. It will have the effect of inducing those who are inclined to be a little lazy, so far as prompt payment of rates is concerned, to pay with more promptitude than has been the case in the past. Clause 10 provides that every owner of rateable property shall give notice in writing of any sale made. And now I pass on to Part II., dealing with the question of rating Native lands. Clause 11 is an interpretation clause. Clause 12 states the Native land which is to be regarded as rateable property. Clause 13 provides that land in a Native rating district is to be rated the same as the land of persons other than Natives, but Native land is not to be liable for special rating. The next clause provides the exceptions to which I have referred. It will be seen that it is proposed to put these under six different headings: Land situated within the Counties of Kawhia, Taupo West, Taupo East, Sounds, and Fiord; lands situated five miles from any public road or highway open for horse-traffic; lands situated outside any borough or town district and which is occupied solely by Natives; lands situated in any borough or town district. It also provides for the exemption of any land that is used by persons in indigent circumstances, or for any other special reason that the Governor may think desirable. The Governor has power from time to time to exempt any other land, under subsection (5). By subsection (6), land the title to which has not been ascertained by the Native Land Court, and of which there is not an occupier, is exempted. It is further provided in connection with the latter portion of this clause that the Governor in Council may revoke in whole or in part any Order in Council made under this section exempting land from rating. Clause 15 provides that Native land is not to be sold for rates without the sanction of the Trust Commissioners; and clause 16 deals with the payment of rates by the Colonial Treasurer to local bodies under section 4 of "The Crown and Native Lands Rating Acts Repeal Act, 1888." An exception is made in the latter portion of this clause, providing that it shall continue in force as if this Act had not passed in respect to the payment of rates on all other Native land to which such section relates. The clauses relating to Native land in Part II. are doubtless of a very important character. They will require careful consideration at the hands of the Native Affairs Committee, and I hope and believe that when the Committee goes into this proposal of the Government they will

improve upon the suggestions contained here, if possible. If the Natives are to receive the benefits of European settlement,—and in many respects they are benefited by our laws,—I think they may fairly be expected to contribute a small portion to the taxation of the country. Now I pass on to Part III. Clause 18 is an interpretation clause, defining the "rateable value" and the "unimproved value"; and it declares improvements to include houses and buildings, fencing, planting, draining of land, clearing from timber, scrub, or fern, laying down in grass or pasture, and any other improvements whatsoever the benefit of which is unexhausted at the time of valuation.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is that the same as the Land Act?

Mr. WARD.—Not quite. Clause 19 provides that the definition of the rateable value of property available shall be "without the buildings and improvements thereon." Clause 21 provides for the manner in which the ratepayers may adopt the Act. Any twenty ratepayers may call upon the local authorities to have a poll taken to decide whether the rating shall be on the basis of the unimproved value, and, in connection with this, the voting-papers will be printed to enable an affirmative or negative answer to be given on this question. Clause 22 provides that, whatever the result of the voting may be, no other votes shall be taken for two years; and it provides, if the vote is in favour of rating on the unimproved value, what steps are to be taken to adopt this portion of the Act. A special order of the local body to adopt the Act is to be forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, who, in the ordinary course, will have the same published in the *Gazette*. On the 30th November next, after the gazetting of the special order, this particular portion of the Act is to come into force. Clause 23 relates to the preparation of valuation-rolls of districts, and provides for the levying of rates under the Act. Clause 24 provides that, when this Part of the Act has been adopted by the principal local body, all rates levied within the district of such local body shall be levied on the unimproved values. Clause 25 fixes the limit of rating at 8d. in the pound on the unimproved value. A rate of 1s. in the pound under "The Rating Act, 1876," is to be deemed to be equal to a rate of six farthings in the pound on the unimproved value, and this is to be considered equal to a rate of three farthings in the pound on the unimproved value under the Rating Act of 1882. Clause 26 provides that, in the case of annually-recurring rates, the Controller-General shall, if he is satisfied that the rate to be levied would have the effect of diminishing the security for a loan, by order published in the *Gazette*, fix a rate which shall, as nearly as may be, produce an amount of rate that would be equal to the amount of rate levied before the passing of the Act. The object is to insure that the necessary amount of revenue may be raised to enable the interest upon the loans of the local body to be met. I have briefly touched upon the clauses of this

Bill. I have no doubt it could not be expected that any important changes such as are indicated here would meet with any thing like the unanimous concurrence of honourable members. I hope, however, that, after the Bill comes back from the two Committees to which I propose to refer it, it will be a measure of considerable use to this country. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I do not propose to discuss the second reading of this Bill at any great length, seeing that the Minister who introduced it proposes to send it to a special Committee; but I cannot refrain from expressing my regret that the Government should have introduced a measure containing provisions such as some of those within the four corners of this Bill. First, let me express my dissent from the provision by which the Government propose to put the burden of valuation upon the local bodies. In this, I think, they are taking a wrong departure altogether—a departure, as far as I can ascertain, taken entirely at the instance of the Land-tax Office, and one that will result, as it seems to me, in very much increasing the expense cast upon the local bodies, who are very heavily burdened as it is in the endeavour to carry out their heavy duties. To begin with, as regards the taxation of the larger properties which must necessarily fall under the land- and income-tax, we shall have first the Colonial Treasurer taking steps to have valuations made of them triennially, and then the local bodies going over the same ground, and, of course, at an additional expense. Then, we have the question of uniformity of valuation. How is that to be secured under the separate valuations of the various local bodies, particularly as regards the country districts, and in a lesser degree the boroughs and municipalities covering the larger centres of population? We shall also have it imputed as against the members of the County Councils that in the appointment of valuers they will secure that their particular properties shall be favoured in the matter of valuation. In this I must not be taken as casting an aspersion upon the character—admittedly a high one—of the men who, as a rule, represent the ratepayers upon the County Councils. We know, however, that great harm is done by aspersions such as I have been referring to, although there may be no ground whatever for them. I am sure that on many grounds the departure the Government propose to take in this matter is very much to be deprecated. The honourable gentleman, I think, owes a duty to this House and the country which he has not discharged, and that is, to give the House a sound and sufficient reason for this change. What is it? Referring to the one which I have already mentioned—that it had been taken at the demand of one of the departments of the Government—

Mr. WARD.—I did not say so.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I say so, and can prove it by the statement of the Commissioner of Taxes, which demands that this change should be made. It will therefore devolve upon the

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Colonial Treasurer to give the House satisfactory reasons for it. If he is unable to do that, I hope the House by no uncertain majority will throw this portion of the Bill out when it goes into Committee—that is, if the special Committee does not deal with it effectually. Then, as to the question of levying the rates upon the unimproved value—we are sure to have constant disputes as to what are and what are not improvements. We shall have the settler who is most expert at putting his case in a favourable light before the assessors gaining very largely at the expense of those who are not so expert. We should, in short, have a difficulty introduced into our valuations of a most useless and mischievous character. And let me now go on to picture as nearly as I may the unfair effect of the proposed method of levying the rates. I can get examples in my own district—for instance, where the improvements constitute only one-sixth of the total value of the properties, where there is no chance of having roads within my lifetime to them; where these improvements have been made to the uttermost possible extent without losing money, because the nature of the land is such that no further money can be expended without actual loss; and yet we shall have under this Bill the rates levied upon five-sixths of the total value of the land, while in other portions of the district, under happier circumstances, with good roads and railways, post-office, telegraph, and so on, only one-third the total value of the property would be rated, simply because the quality of the land and the facilities for road- and railway-carriage have admitted of large improvements being made at an adequate profit to the owner. Why should the unfortunate owner of the first class of property I have described be taxed to this unfair extent, and his much more fortunate neighbour be let off to a corresponding extent? Surely there is no fairness or justice in that. I do not think there is any member of this House who would be more glad than I to encourage the hard-working settler who is anxious to improve his property. I am anxious to encourage every effort in such a good direction; but in the first examples I have put, where the land is of a very poor description, and further improvements impossible, what is the sense or justice of punishing the owners, as will be done by this system of rating? It is, I say, monstrous and outrageous. Then, how are we to have the decision of the ratepayers taken as to whether or not this important change is to be made in the system of rating? Take a county with a good many hundred ratepayers in it, such as the one I represent. We are to have the whole of the district put to the heavy expense of a poll to decide this question on the petition of twenty ratepayers: and who is to pay the expense if the poll is decided against them? The burden is to be cast upon the ratepayers as a whole. Surely the honourable gentleman has not given much consideration to the measure, or he would never ask that this be done merely at the instance of twenty

ratepayers. Then, let me come to the case of the large centres: and take the case of the reclaimed land in this city. We have thousands of pounds expended in the erection of handsome buildings on a section of land, and immediately alongside we have a vacant section, upon which rates have been paid for many years past: and is it to be thought for a moment that it would be fair to rate each of these two sections upon the same value? Surely the honourable gentleman cannot expect the House to consent to that. It would be even more unfair than in the case of the country properties I have endeavoured to describe. In clause 9, I think, provision is made for a penalty at the rate of 10 per cent. on rates overdue for three months. I think that is a very good provision, but I would ask the honourable gentleman to amend it, and to make it read, not at the rate of 10 per cent., but an absolute 10 per cent. Imagine the work thrown upon the clerk of a local body in calculating the penalty at the rate of 10 per cent.! It would never do at all. And if the House decides that three months is not sufficient, let the time be extended; and let the penalty be 10 per cent. as under the land- and income-tax. Then, in clause 10, provision is made that upon the sale of a property the vendor shall give notice to the local body one month after such sale. Unless the honourable gentleman attaches a penalty for failure to do this, the clause will practically be a dead-letter. Clause 11 provides as to what is the definition of an occupier. Take a section of land the certificate of title of which includes, say, fifty Natives, the first in order of which is to be liable for the rates. In many cases this would be altogether inefficient; and the honourable gentleman will have to provide differently—I am satisfied of that. Then, as to the rating of Native lands generally. I do not know what is the case in other districts, but the honourable gentleman is entirely wrong if he imagines, as I understood him to say, that no provision has hitherto been made by which Native lands have been rated. In my district the greater part of the Native lands are already rated, simply because they are occupied by Europeans.

Mr. WARD.—Not directly.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—But under the Bill as it is now drawn the position in regard to these properties already rated would remain exactly as it is now. Then, I would ask the honourable gentleman's attention to the clauses providing that any area under 10 acres that is the property of any one particular Native shall be exempted from rates. He would find that this would scarcely work, because nominal subdivisions would immediately be made, so that Native lands perhaps immediately outside of boroughs, enjoying all the privileges and advantages of good roads, would practically remain rent-free. I said I would not take up the time of the House, as the Bill has to go before the Native Affairs Committee, but I cannot speak too strongly against the provisions I

have already referred to—I mean, the casting of the triennial valuations on the local bodies, and the proposal to leave to the decision of the ratepayers whether or not the rates shall be paid upon the unimproved value. One other important feature is this—and I would ask the honourable gentleman's earnest attention to it: In the county I represent nearly the whole of this work has been done, and remarkably well done, by two large Road Boards, and it has only been with considerable difficulty that these two important Boards have been prevented from splitting up into several smaller bodies, and that admittedly would have been to the very great disadvantage of the district generally. If this Bill passes, these two Road Boards cannot be kept together, but will inevitably be split up into several sections, representing the different descriptions of land of which the county is composed. The eastern part of the county, where improvements cannot be made to any great extent owing to the nature of the land, will be forced to separate from the richer portion of the district, where the improvements are necessarily far greater. And I warn the House that similar results will be the outcome of the Bill all over the colony.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—I just wish to say a word or two in regard to this Bill, and I do think we are indebted to the honourable gentleman who has just sat down for his very lucid remarks on this most unnecessary measure; and I think I must express my pleasure at the Colonial Treasurer, in moving the second reading, having saved so many honourable members who he knows are unable or unwilling to take the trouble to read this Bill, because his second-reading speech has put into *Hansard* the Bill itself. He never gave any reason, as he should have done, for the alterations that this Bill is intended to effect. He never dwelt on the leading principles, except to read the Bill clause by clause, letter by letter, and put it into *Hansard*. Any member of this House might move a second reading of that kind—anybody who could read. He gave us no reason whatever for having proposed the alteration of rating unimproved value. He gave no reason whatever for the proposal to rate Native land, except this: that one of the clauses says that the Colonial Treasurer was for the future to be exempt from paying any more Native rates from the Treasury. With regard to the local valuation also, no reasons were given for these changes. Now, Sir, I think the honourable gentleman has made a mistake in introducing this measure. It is uncalled-for, it is crude, and it would be absolutely unworkable. The honourable gentleman, in dealing with the question of local rating, has, no doubt, been governed in a great measure by his local knowledge. The Southland County happens to be, in itself, a small province, or, rather, it is a very substantial province. It is so large and so wealthy that it is able to pay first-class men to fill the different offices under its control, and it has maintained a first-class man as valuer for a number of years past.

But if the honourable gentleman had inquired into the area, valuations, and financial position of every county in the colony he would have found many counties not as large and not having the same command of revenue as a single riding in the Southland County. It is impossible for some of these smaller counties and Road Boards, with revenue only in hundreds, to undertake this local rating, because they cannot afford to pay competent men to do it. If all the counties of the colony were in the same position as the Southland County there would be something reasonable in the proposal. The Selwyn County is about as large; its rateable value is the largest in the colony, and I believe its population is the greatest: but the Southland County for years has had a revenue of some £30,000 a year, and it is therefore able to deal in a proper manner with such a question as this; but this will not apply generally to the counties of the colony, still less to the counties in the North Island. There are many points that one might touch upon which seem to me most unfair; but the Bill is going before a Committee—that is, if it passes the second reading, and I hope it will not. But, if it is read a second time, and goes before the Committee, and comes back unaltered, it will be more than I expect. The most singular provision is probably in subsection (6) of section 2, which provides that in regard to Crown lands the taxation leviable upon land under pastoral lease is to be the same as it would be under the other settlement conditions with regard to Crown lands—that is to say, that where there is nothing but a temporary grazing-license you are to pay the same as in the case of land held under the farm conditions of settlement. That seems to me a clause that will require to be altered. What I rose to speak about more particularly was the rating of Native lands. As the law stands at present with regard to Native lands, it is a most unjust and iniquitous proposal. The Colonial Treasurer said that, if the Natives were to be protected by our laws, they should pay taxes as the Europeans do, or something to that effect. But the position in which the Natives are placed is not the same as that in which the Europeans are placed. What I have advocated on previous occasions in this House, and what I have advocated in the Native Affairs Committee, is this: The only true principle of dealing with Native lands is that we should set aside a sufficient area, so that it may be reserved for the Native race. Let these reserves, in order to be dealt with, be placed in the hands of the Public Trustee, if you like. They are then absolutely inalienable. Then, with regard to other Native lands, instead of the Native Land Court dividing them into large blocks of land and putting in two or three hundred owners for each block, or even a hundred, or fifty owners, let them be subdivided so that there should be only a single family, or a few names at least, for each portion, so that you can individualise, even at the first division of the block, as nearly as possible the area that is to be dealt with. At

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the present time no Native who is interested in any block containing a number of names can deal with any portion of the block as his own. He may be desirous of doing so, but he knows very well that he cannot do so with advantage to himself. If he likes to cultivate a portion of the block and put a house upon it, when the land is subdivided by the Native Land Court he is in this position: When the application is made to the Court to individualise the title, every Native in the block to be partitioned rushes to get this cultivated portion for himself. The man who may have cultivated it has no position of advantage over those who have not touched the land. They all make a rush for the improved portion. Under the old Native custom the man would have a right to his house and his improvements: he has no right to them now. And I say that no proposal to tax Native land is fair or just until you first give the Natives a title such as the European possesses for his land, and until we give them the same right to deal with the land so granted to them under title as we possess in respect of our own land. Individualise, give them the right to deal with their land, and then, when you have done that, I shall support their being taxed. Put them all on the same footing as ourselves in other respects, and then put them on the same footing as regards taxation, and not until then. I shall not oppose the second reading of the Bill, but I hope it will not pass that stage.

Mr. FISH.—I do not propose to detain the House very long in discussing this Bill, more particularly as the Treasurer has been good enough to intimate that he proposes to place my name on the Select Committee to look into the Bill. I may, however, say this: I am rather inclined to be of the opinion that we are drifting into a very serious mistake in allowing almost all Bills of this character, and others of a different character, to be sent to Select Committees to be dealt with. It appears to me that it gives the opportunity to the Government of bringing before the House experimental legislation, and of getting it doctored and tinkered in Committee, and we are always told on these occasions that the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill deprecates any discussion on the second reading because the Bill is going to a Select Committee. Now, this seems to me to be very much like an attempt to stifle debate on the merits of the Bill, because if a Bill comes to the House which it is proposed to send to a Committee, and if it is intrinsically bad, and cannot well be amended to make it good, then the real issues of the Bill should be debated on the second reading, and not on the motion for the committal of the Bill after it comes back to us from the Committee. Another objection that I have to this course is that if the Government chose they could select the members of the Committees to suit themselves. I do not say they have done so in this case, for I do not think they have; but, at any rate, they could put on that Committee a sufficient number of their own supporters who would, in all probability, sup-

port the retention of the main features of the Bill. The result of that is this: The Committee brings down a favourable report to the House, and the House is frequently misled into passing a Bill on account of the mana which attaches to it on account of its coming back here with a favourable kind of report from the Committee. I am inclined to think the House should hesitate before continuing the transference of Bills to Select Committees. I have to congratulate the honourable member for Wairarapa upon the very sensible and practical way in which he dealt with this measure. I agree both with him and with the last speaker in the opinion that this Bill is not wanted at all. I also agree with both these speakers in what they said as to the fact that the Treasurer, in introducing the Bill, gave no reasons for this departure from the settled policy of some years' standing. In saying the few words I intend to say on the Bill, I shall speak on it from a city point of view more than from any other. And I am free to confess that the 3rd, 4th, and 9th clauses in the First Part of the Bill do meet with my very strong disapproval. The 3rd clause is an unnecessary interference, as far as I can see, with the principles by which Councils are guided in their proceedings at the present time. At any rate, we find that the present law in the City of Dunedin operates very favourably, and we cannot, nor can our Town Clerk, see the slightest necessity for the change in this clause sought to be made. The 4th clause introduces what, to my mind, is one of the most pernicious principles that it is possible to seek to introduce into any measure governing the local bodies. It would, I think, if passed as it stands, do more in the direction of creating fogot votes in a city than anything it is possible to imagine, and the confusion into which the rolls of the cities would be brought by it would be inextricable indeed. Clause 9 is a most extraordinary production. I am very sorry to say there seems to be a desire on the part of the Government to fine, fine; punish, punish; and that they introduce drastic legislation of all kinds. Now, what are the facts with regard to the collection of rates? According to the law as it stands, the rates are legally payable twelve months in advance. Of course, by the law we are compelled to pay our rates twelve months in advance, and yet for being more than three months behind that twelve months in advance the unfortunate ratepayer is to be mulcted in a sum of 10 per cent. from the time the rates ought to be paid. In the City of Dunedin the rates are to be paid twelve months in advance. We do not get from all the ratepayers their money twelve or nine, sometimes not eight, months in advance, but we manage our affairs so that, when the time has elapsed when the local body must insist on the rates being paid, there is seldom, if ever, a larger amount than £20 of unpaid rates. By judicious action on the part of the collectors we get the amount pleasantly paid without distressing anybody. If it is satisfactory to the local bodies themselves, we certainly should not attempt to interfere with

them in any power given to them, by obliging them to fine their unfortunate ratepayers for any little lapse of time in the payment of rates which should be made in advance. With regard to Part II., I will not trouble myself to go through that part of the Bill at the present time. It refers, of course, to Native land entirely, and, speaking subject to a further consideration of the Bill, I am inclined to think that the rating of Native lands is a step in the right direction if carried out properly. Whether this will have that effect I am not prepared to say, and I will not deal with it further at present. But, with regard to Part III. of this Bill, I think it is absolutely unworkable in any large city. In point of fact, I think the Government have made a great mistake in applying the Third Part to cities at all. I think it is quite possible—I speak, of course, subject to correction—that it may be made to apply without any hurt to country districts. I do not say, however, that it would do so; but I am quite certain—and it is from this point of view I look at the matter—that when it is applied to large cities it will be absolutely and entirely unworkable. If the Third Part were adopted in the City of Dunedin we should be unable to raise enough rates to pay the interest on our loans and sinking fund, without reckoning the ordinary expenditure of keeping the city in repair, office expenditure, and so forth. Clause 26, which is supposed to remedy and readjust any deficit which might arise under the rating clauses of the Bill, is utterly inapplicable to large cities, because it only applies to the special rate; it would not help the main rate in the slightest degree. I have many strong arguments to adduce against this part of the Bill, but I am prepared to allow the Bill to go to the Committee on the present occasion, and I presume the House will, as a matter of courtesy, pass the second reading and refer it to the Select Committee. I object, however, to the principle of the Third Part. I do not believe there is any reason for taxing the unimproved value of the land at all, especially as regards the cities. I look upon it as a most vicious proposal. What appears to be the practice of the Government in regard to these things is this: It appears to me that it is only necessary for one, two, or three of the most rabid of their own supporters who have "fads" on the brain to go to some Minister, explain to him the "fad," lay it before him in a flowing, fulsome manner, and the answer of the Minister is this: "Oh, yes; it is very good. We will put it in a Bill and try it." With respect to one-half of the Bills that are brought before the House, I am convinced the Ministers who introduce them never consult collectively their colleagues at all, and never consider the bearing and effect the measures may have on the country; and that is the reason why we are deluged with Bills on the Order Paper, two-thirds of which will never receive any consideration from the House at all. And for what reason are they placed there? This is not government; it is only playing with government. The Government would be far more in favour with the House

and with the people if they were to bring in three-fifths fewer Bills to the House than they do, and if they were to let those they do bring in be those only referring to matters which the country really wants legislation upon, and which are proper and desirable in the interests of the country. I think this Government might well be called "the Bill-run-mad Government." Nothing is gained by placing Bills on the Order Paper, and the effect is that it is impossible to study all these Bills. Any member of the House, if he is a studious man, and is desirous of doing his duty as a member should do it, will find that he cannot possibly grapple with the vast mass of Bills we have to consider. And Sir, it is not so much the quantity—it is the uncertainty as to what Bills we shall ultimately have to consider that is so annoying and perplexing. We find frequently—and all industrious honourable members will admit this—after we have given a day or two days to the study of a certain Bill which is likely to come immediately before us, that, to our annoyance, it appears next day down about No. 95 on the Order Paper. That is not government; that is not legislation. And, until we get a Government that will simply put Bills on the Order Paper which are the emanation of their own brains, and which are not placed upon the Order Paper merely to please a set of volatile, rabid, fanatical supporters, we shall never have good government in this House. Better far that we should have less legislation than that we should have it rushed before us in the manner in which it is done by the present Government. And, indeed, with regard to other Governments it has been the case, though not to such a large extent. Now, with regard to the valuations, I should just like to say, so far as the large cities are concerned, that I do not think the proposed alteration in the valuation—that is to say, making the local bodies prepare their own valuation-rolls—would affect the large cities much. I know the City of Dunedin has always prepared its own roll, notwithstanding the law to the contrary; we have preferred to do so, and find that it works very well, and therefore we should not object to this from a city point of view; and I think the same holds good with regard to Wellington. But I could easily imagine that the effects of the change on the country districts would prove extremely severe. The most of the country districts, I apprehend, are very much like the city districts; they are rather impecunious, and have great difficulty, no doubt, in making both ends meet. Now, throwing the expense of preparing these rolls on the local bodies entails upon them very considerable expense, and one that will be to a large extent a waste of money, inasmuch as at present the Government have got all the machinery at hand for making valuations, which the local bodies have not, and which they will have to create as new offices. Therefore I think that in the country districts this matter will press very heavily. And here again I may remark—and I am sure that honourable members who follow the business of the House must remark—an unfortunate

Mr. Fish

propensity disclosed by the Government to do everything in their power to injure the finance of local bodies. In the first place, instead of decentralising matters, attempts are made from day to day, as we see in numbers of Bills, to centralise everything and bring it under the thumb of the Minister in Wellington, or his local satellite in the place to which the matter applies. There is a desire in almost every piece of local legislation to cripple their finance by imposing more taxation on them, whilst at the same time the Government are fully aware that in almost nine cases out of ten in regard to local bodies it is with the greatest difficulty that they can pay their way. I would urge honourable members, nearly all of whom are interested to one extent or another in the successful development of local institutions, when these Bills come on one by one, to let the Government know once for all that they do not mean to allow our local bodies to be crushed out of existence by interfering with their finance, nor to have all their functions, their most material powers, absorbed and usurped by centralising efforts on the part of the Government, who ought, if they are true to their principles, to localise more and more than has been done in the past. I shall not detain the House longer. So far as I am concerned I shall endeavour, as far as my knowledge of local affairs extends, to perfect the Bill in Committee, if it can be perfected, of which I have some considerable doubt. I trust it will either not be heard of any more, or, if it is, will be put in such a shape as to be something like acceptable to the House and to the country.

Sir J. HALL was understood to say,—Sir, I shall not speak at any length upon the Bill at this stage, because I am at present physically unable to do so, and also because the Minister in charge of the Bill has announced his intention of referring it to a Select Committee. With regard to the necessity for the Bill, which has been disputed by previous speakers, I admit that if the Government abandon the triennial assessment for land-tax and the valuation of improvements, it necessarily follows that there must be a Bill of this kind; therefore I am not able to vote with my honourable friend who proposed to move the rejection of the Bill. I must say, however, that the drafting of this measure appears to me to be very unsatisfactory. It complicates to an extraordinary extent the laws under which local bodies have to levy rates. At present the rating provisions in force are distributed over four different Acts. By the first of these there were repealed two Acts—the Rating Acts of 1876 and 1879. They are off the statute-book—they are not comprised in the latest collections of the statutes. Now the Minister proposes not to put into this Bill those portions of the 1876 and 1879 Acts which are required for his present purpose, but only to say that certain specified clauses of these repealed Acts shall again come into operation. Sir, the state of the law is now in some confusion, but if this Bill is carried as it is now framed it will be confusion worse

confounded, and I defy any local body to keep out of difficulties in levying rates. There is a further peculiarity about it: Clause 2 revives a number of the clauses of the Acts of 1876 and 1879; but if you go on to a later clause it actually repeals clause 9, which has just been revived in clause 2. I must say that such drafting is most slovenly and unsatisfactory.

Mr. WARD.—What clause is that?

Sir J. HALL.—Subsection (1) of clause 2 revives sections 4 to 18 of the Act of 1876. Then, a clause further on repeals part of section 9, which is one of the revived sections. Now, with regard to the question of rating on the unimproved value, we have heard from honourable members representing certain constituencies that it is very unsatisfactory to them. I have referred the matter to the local authorities in my district for an opinion on the subject, and they say they believe it to be the feeling there also. What do we levy rates for? For providing roads and bridges for those persons who have to use them; and it is only right that such rates should rest, as far as we can make them, in fair proportion upon those who use the roads. The occupiers of poor unimprovable properties, of which there are a great many, do not use the roads to anything like the extent that the occupiers of good lands, which are greatly improved and give rise to a great traffic, always must do. It is the more valuable properties—the more highly improved properties—that use the roads and bridges most largely, and should, if possible, be made to pay in proportion for them. As the honourable member for Wairarapa pointed out, this Bill will throw a largely-increased share of the rates on properties which cannot be improved. These are reasons why it appears to me impolitic and unreasonable to make this change. It is not called for. I have never heard in the country a desire expressed for it, and I believe, when referred to the ratepayers, the change will not be adopted. It will, however, introduce an element of uncertainty into local affairs, and perhaps put the ratepayers to the expense of a poll; but that is all that will come of it. With regard to the cities, the new system appears to be perfectly preposterous. Suppose the case of two quarter-acre sections of land near each other in a city: on one there is a small house, the owner of which uses the streets to a very small extent; on the other is a great establishment, employing a large number of persons, and giving rise to a large amount of traffic; the owner will pay no more for the use of the streets than the occupier of the small tenement. With regard to section 4, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) referred to it correctly as a roll-stuffing clause. I could not have conceived a clause more ingeniously constructed to enable an owner to stuff the rolls than this is. At present the law provides that a tenant shall not be put on the rolls unless he has a six months' tenancy; but under this section he may claim to be on the rolls with a six days' tenancy. With regard to section 9, I do not go the

whole length of objection that has been raised by previous speakers to any interest being charged on rates which are left unpaid. I think it is quite right that if ratepayers will not pay their rates within a reasonable time some interest should be charged to them. But I would suggest to the Colonial Treasurer whether he could not attain the same object by providing that if rates are paid punctually at the offices of the local bodies there should be allowed some discount. That, I think, would attain the same object, and I would ask the honourable gentleman to consider this alternative. With regard to the provision requiring owners to give notice to the local authority of sales of rateable property, I think it is imperfect. It should provide that he should give all necessary particulars, and remain liable for all rates till he has given the required notice. I am glad the Minister is going to send the Bill to a Select Committee. There is no doubt, as I said before, that a law on the subject is required to provide for the cessation of the triennial assessment; but the Bill goes further than there is any necessity for. With regard to the proposals for rating Native lands, I am bound to say that the time has arrived when the Natives should be made to contribute to the cost of roads. But I would ask the Government to deal in the most considerate manner they can with the Native race. The Minister is quite right to refer the whole question to the Native Affairs Committee, and I should hope that if the Native members have any suggestions to make which will render the change more acceptable they will receive the favourable consideration of the Government.

Mr. KAPA.—I wish to congratulate the Minister upon bringing this measure before the House, as it has given me the opportunity of expressing my objections to the measure. I look upon this Bill as divided into two parts—the portion relating to the rating of Native lands, and that which deals with the rating of European lands. I may say that the Europeans are very well acquainted with the theory and the practice of raising rates on their own lands, but as regards the Natives it is quite different. The Natives are totally inexperienced, and I foresee a cause of a great deal of trouble. The Natives look with great apprehension on this measure, but perhaps it is due to their want of experience of the principles contained in the Bill. I do not think I can say that I should be able to in any way improve this Bill, or to suggest amendments to it, but I think I shall have to oppose it absolutely, no matter what form it may take. I foresee that, no matter how we amend this Bill, trouble will arise when it comes to be administered by the different local bodies. Then there will be confusion, which will ultimately have to be dealt with by the Government. Now, it has been said that hitherto the Natives have paid no rates. That is not the case. The accrued rates now due on Native lands under the Act lately in force amount, I believe, to some £200,000. The honourable gentleman, in introducing this measure, has stated that this is

a very happy and proper time for imposing rates on Native lands, and I imagine he made that statement because he knows that the Natives have lately been agitating for some measure of local government. The Government seem to be doing everything in their power to obstruct the Natives in the management of their lands, and to place restrictions and heavy burdens upon those lands. For instance, they have proposals before the House for handing over the lands absolutely to the Public Trustee; and this is the last straw, as it were. Sir, I should like to treat this Bill as I would treat a fowl: I should like to wring its neck. Now, I hope the honourable gentleman in charge of this measure will be reasonable. I hope he will take the hints he has received from several honourable members who have just spoken. I hope the honourable gentleman will agree to have this Bill cast out utterly. I do not think the time is opportune for passing it, and I think it would be better to leave it to the ensuing Parliament, or to some more fitting time. If it can be shown that this is to the advantage of the Natives, and the Natives ask that their lands should be rated, then I see no objection to it; but when the Natives are living all together on a block of land I do not see why they should have to pay rates. One objection I have to the Bill is this: I believe that under it the industrious Natives will be singled out and made to pay the rates, and the bulk of the people will escape. I again ask the Government and the Minister in charge of this Bill not to hurry this matter through, but to be reasonable. I think the House should bear in mind that none of the legislation lately introduced has been favourable in the least degree to the Natives. My honourable friend the member for the Western Maori District moved, when a petition was presented, that it should be read by the Clerk, but had soon to give that up because it would have taken up the whole of the time of Parliament if the Clerk were to read all the petitions protesting against this Native legislation. With regard to the proposal to refer this Bill to the Native Affairs Committee, for some time past we have been dealing with another measure of Native reserves administration, and I am not at all satisfied with the progress made, and I believe that if this Bill goes to that Committee our work will be just as unsatisfactory. The Government has such a multitude of Bills that I do not see how we can deal with them all; and I do not see how that Committee will be competent to deal with this Bill and the Native-land Purchases Bill, and with several others which will come before the Committee in due course. Strong expression has come from the Natives lately against Government Bills dealing with their lands, and that they should be given some power to manage their own lands. I consider this is another measure for the purpose of degrading the Natives and taking away what shreds of authority they still possess over their land. I consider that it would be far better to be born a Chinaman and to come here and cast your lot in this

Mr. Kapa

country than to be born a Maori—an original lord of the soil. I would infinitely prefer to be a Chinaman, because I feel that Chinamen are better treated. I see nothing to approve of in this measure.

Mr. TAIPUA.—Sir, I look to the fact that those honourable gentlemen who have already spoken have pointed out some of the defects of this Bill, and the effects of the opposition they have brought against it give me some hope and encouragement. It would be a matter of great satisfaction to me, and the Natives would be heartily thankful, if every member in this House would consider carefully and earnestly the nature of the legislation which this Government proposes to bring into effect to deal with the Natives and their lands. I never remember seeing a parallel Government to the present one. It seems to me to be the ambition of every Minister to introduce a Bill to deal with Native lands. It appears as if the Government were desirous of taking from us all control of our lands and our property. If the House should decide that the Natives are to pay their share of the rates, I hope the House will be reasonable, and make the burden as easy to bear and as light as possible, considering the position the Natives are placed in. First of all we should have equal laws, which we have not got at present. The Government wish to give us our burdens first and privileges afterwards. The law should be made perfectly equal to the Natives and the Europeans, and that would be the time to cause us to bear equal burdens. At the present time the Natives are actuated by a very strong desire to emulate their European brethren, and to direct their attention to agriculture and to the raising of stock. Now, in spite of all this very laudable desire on the part of the Natives to copy their European brethren, the Government propose to take away all authority from us in the dealing with our lands. It is proposed in some instances to take away our lands bodily from our control, and to hand them over to the control of one man, making that one man a perfect autocrat. Now, the Government are handing over to one person the absolute control of our lands and our property, without reserving to us any control whatever. They are treating us as if the land does not belong to us, and had been taken away from us by conquest. I do not think that this measure should be pressed at present. It might well be held over until next year, until some decision is come to with regard to the very question which the Natives are now debating—the question of having some local administration of their own affairs. As a proof of the unpopularity of the proposed Government legislation, I believe this is the first Parliament on record during which petitions have been received from Native women protesting against a Government measure. And, in connection with this matter, I wish to express my thanks to you, Mr. Speaker, for having allowed some of the petitions that I had the honour to present to be read by the Clerk; but, with regard to those same petitions, I have ceased to ask the House to

have them read, because they have become so numerous. I content myself with simply laying them on the table in bundles. Now, the Government and Parliament, in dealing with the Native people, should not forget this fact: that, during all the Native wars hitherto, a very large section of the people have stood loyally by the Government. The Natives, like many Europeans, have not hesitated to shed their blood in the defence of this country against people of their own Maori race. Hitherto the Queen has always placed every injunction upon the Government to treat the Native people with kindness, but it seems to me that gracious act is now entirely forgotten. I firmly believe, too, but for the Treaty of Waitangi the Natives would have been wiped out long ago, and there would have been only a remnant of them left. I have heard that formerly the European laws relating to property were very stringent—so much so that if a man stole a sheep he was hanged for it. I believe that but for the Treaty of Waitangi we should have been all treated in the same way as sheep-stealers. I hope that the Government will agree to postpone this Bill until next year, so that we may have a better opportunity of considering it. The honourable gentleman who introduced this measure is pretty well aware of the state of Native feeling, because he visited a large Native meeting at Waipatu last year, and obtained an expression of opinion from the Natives, and he must have seen, from the large number of Natives present at that meeting, that the Natives were actuated by a very lively desire to devise some measure for their benefit. I think that the Bill before the House is a very harsh one. I see nothing in it that meets with my approval. I think that if it were postponed to some more fitting time we should be able to come to some compromise which would give satisfaction to both sides; and, if by that time we should be all treated in the same manner, then the course would be much simpler than it is at present. The Government are no doubt aware that the Natives have presented a great number of petitions to the House, asking that some authority to manage their affairs be given them, and I think that, if the reasonable request of the Natives were granted, then they would be able to come to some satisfactory arrangements with regard to measures such as the one at present before the House. Considering the importance of the measure, and that it is an entirely new departure, I think that more time should be given to us to consider it, and to decide what is best to be done under the circumstances. Considering also that this is such an entirely new departure from anything the Natives have experienced hitherto, I foresee it will cause a great deal of trouble between the two races. It will cause an estrangement between the two races which cannot easily be healed. We should remember the unfortunate differences that have taken place between the two races in the past, and do nothing now, or in the future, to bring about a recurrence of those differences. We

all remember the circumstances under which Te Kooti was taken prisoner and sent to the Chatham Islands. When he escaped from the Chatham Islands—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must show some connection between that and the Bill. I am anxious to give every possible latitude to an honourable member of the Native race, but I cannot see how the incident he refers to has any connection with the present Bill.

Mr. TAIPUA.—I mention that because I wish to point out this: that if anything is done on the present occasion to bring about a quarrel between the two races it will be very disastrous to the country, and cause very great expense. I mention that quarrel because it was caused by dealing with lands, and the result of that quarrel was that the country has now to pay a very large amount of interest annually. Now, it seems to me that, whether I make very long remarks or short ones regarding this measure, the result will be entirely the same; but I am glad that some honourable gentlemen have pointed out parts of this Bill which they object to.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—I have listened with very great attention to the last honourable gentleman who spoke. He has drawn one side of the picture, and I wish to draw the other. In the course of his speech he said that he wishes to see one law for both races. Well, I may say that this is one of the Bills before us wherein it is proposed to tax occupied and well-defined Native land, and it is a step in the right direction, and a step to bring about that end. Now, in my district we have a very large area of Native lands blocking the progress of the country. We know who the owners are, and we know that they ought to occupy these lands. These lands are covered with furze, to the detriment of adjoining lands. They are not called upon to contribute their share to the fencing, nor to the formation of roads. There is one law for the Natives, and another for the Europeans. We are taxed not only to pay our rates upon the land occupied by the settlers, but we are called upon and taxed to pay rates on Native land; because we have to maintain the roads, and the Native people use the roads, and in many cases they use them equally with, if not more than, the Europeans; because they go in for contracts for carting flax. They cart this flax over the road. They get a good price for carting the flax—they make a good profit, and pay nothing for the roads. They are bringing over large quantities of firewood, and generally using the roads, and have to pay nothing towards the maintenance of them. I say this has been going on too long in New Zealand, and too long in these settled districts. I do not want to see land not occupied—not defined—outside the boundary of constituted counties—taxed; but where there are properly-constituted counties and Road Boards, and where the roads are laid out, and formed, and bridged, and culverted, in these districts it is nothing but fair and honest that these lands should be brought under the system of rating. Now, as this

Bill only proposes to tax these lands—and wisely, too—on the unimproved value of the land, I think every member of this House, and the colony as a whole, will recognise that this is a fair and honest measure: and it is surprising that the settlers of New Zealand have stood this double taxation as long as they have. Now, the honourable gentleman who spoke last has presented a large number of petitions to this House. I had the honour to present a petition last year from some Natives in the Waihi Block, and I recollect that that petition was referred to a Committee of which the honourable gentleman was a member. Seeing the way in which the petition was dealt with, and the way in which those presenting the petition were treated, I quite agree, Sir, with the honourable gentleman's remark that the Public Trustee has too much power in reference to these lands: and this Bill is giving him more power. The sooner we destroy the power of the Public Trustee in these Native lands the better it will be for this country; or at all events we should set up a better tribunal, not consisting of one man with this enormous power of dealing with these large tracts of land and large sums of money. I have always been in favour of dealing fairly and honestly with these Natives, and say New Zealand can claim that we have dealt with the Natives in this country better than the aborigines have been dealt with in any other country on the face of the earth. We have given to them all the privileges of civilisation; we have even given to them special representation in this House; and those honourable gentlemen—the Native members—sit here, and they have a right to vote, and do vote, upon the question of putting taxes upon the lands of the Europeans. Such being the case, the time has come, and I hope the House will recognise that fact, when those lands in settled districts shall be brought under the provisions of this Bill. I think, myself, the Natives have got a large number of grievances—grievances that should have been remedied long, long ago; and I quite recognise that the Governments of the past have not dealt fairly with these Natives. I have before me now a report from Sir William Fox. I have asked a question during this session of Parliament so as to get the grievances of these Natives redressed. Now, these Maoris never went into rebellion. I do not wish to trespass upon the patience of the House, or to go outside the Bill under discussion, because I shall have plenty of time to bring up the statement again, and I intend to do so; but, as it embodies the policy of the Government in dealing with these lands I think I am within my right in saying how it will affect the Europeans and the Natives. When Mr. Cadman was Native Minister I took him for a drive only two miles outside the Borough of New Plymouth, and I showed him Native lands lying idle there which ought to be under cultivation. I see this in my district, in spite of what the honourable gentleman may say. I have taken Natives myself to the Native Department, and they have expressed a desire to be taxed the same as the Europeans, providing

they are allowed to deal with their lands in the same manner as Europeans—that is, to have these lands handed over to them in order that they may administer them themselves. I hope the Government will allow the Natives to come under the provisions in another Native Bill. There is a provision being made whereby a Native can become possessed of his own land, and he can hold the land, so long as he likes to use it, by paying rates and taxes. The moment he wishes to dispose of his interest in the land he can do so. The land will be leased, the rates will be paid, and the balance of the rents will be handed over to those people who are the owners. It is necessary for the advancement of the colony that these lands should become rateable, and I am very glad to see this Bill before the House. Now, it has been stated that the Government are bringing in a large number of Bills. Of course we know they are, and the reason why they are bringing in such a large number is that Governments in the past have neglected to do their duty. We should not be discussing the merits or demerits of this Bill now if past Governments had taken this matter in hand. They have been afraid to tackle the question of rating Native land, and I can claim for this Government that they are not afraid. They recognise the importance of these lands being taxed, and they will have my very best support in carrying this Bill and making it become law.

Mr. PARATA.—I wish to make a few remarks upon this Bill, as it affects the Natives, and will rate the Native lands in both Islands. I think this Bill has been presented to this House rather too soon, because the Natives have not been made aware of the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill rating Native lands. That is why I think the Bill has been brought in at a wrong time. A Bill of this sort, affecting the Natives, should be circulated among them during the recess, so that they might know what the provisions are, and what the policy of the Government is in regard to the Native race. I am sorry to say that I do not agree with this proposal, because the Natives have not been made aware of what is about to be done, and they are not educated enough to understand the meaning of the rating of Native lands. I am pleased to find that the part of the Bill that touches Europeans is opposed by other honourable members in regard to the lands in the South Island. I believe it would be very difficult to rate these people, because some of the Natives only hold half an acre, and some only two acres, and others hold up to as high as ten acres. Another thing which I do not like in this Bill is this: Suppose they are rated, where is the money to be spent?

An Hon. MEMBER.—On their roads.

Mr. PARATA.—It does not say in the Bill that the money will be spent to improve their roads. We have been rated under the Crown and Native Lands Rating Act in previous years. The Natives were charged with that money, although the Government paid it to the local bodies; but when Native land was

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leased to Europeans it was levied on that land, and, though the Natives did not reap any benefit from it, they still had to pay, if the land was sold to the Crown or to a private individual, for the charges would be charged against his land if they had the benefit of the rate. That is why I said this Bill had been introduced too soon.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh! no.

Mr. PARATA.—Yes, because they do not understand how it will work, and the Bill does not state what lands are to be exempted. I think this Bill might have been left over till after the general election.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh, oh!

Mr. PARATA.—I say it should; and I will give the House my reason—namely, that the Natives have not been made aware of what the intentions of the Government are—whether they would like to have their land rated, how the land is going to be rated, and how the money is going to be spent, and whether it is going to be spent for their own benefit or not. This is why I say this Bill should be postponed till after the general election, so that every Native candidate can bring it before the people. It has been said in this House, "Let the people know; let the people rule"; therefore I say, let the Native population know what the intentions of the Government are: and there are many measures which have been brought before this House in regard to which honourable members have said that the people did not know anything about them. We will take the women's franchise, for instance. Honourable members have urged that that is a new departure, and that it should first be submitted to the people. Now, this measure is a new departure in regard to the Natives. I do not see why the Natives should not be made acquainted with the intention of the Government in this respect. I think especially that the Natives in the South Island should be exempted from rates on their land, because the land was taken from them for a mere bagatelle. Thirty million acres of land were taken from the Natives for £2,000. The country can therefore afford to exempt the whole of the Native reserves in the South Island and the small area of land which the Natives hold. It is my place here to protect the interests of the Natives of the South Island. They sent me here to do so. I may say that I have had several letters from these people in reply to my communications to them, in which they say they do not know what it means or how it is going to work. Although the Natives in the South Island own very small holdings, they have not got their titles to these holdings, and this Bill does not say that it is only when they get their titles that they shall be rated. I do not think it is right that rates should be levied upon the land when the Natives have not got their individual titles, because one man, as the matter now stands, may have to pay the whole of the rates, while others escape from paying. According to the Rating Act they are charged at present a rate of 6 per cent. As I have said, the Natives do not know how this Bill will

work. I will take, Sir, your own District of Waimate. Look at the little bit of land which the Natives hold there. Part of that land is shingle. I do not think it is worth more than 1s. or 2s. an acre in some places. Then, take the Waitaki: what is the value of that land? This ought to be looked into properly before you levy rates upon these people. Numbers of these people cannot make a living on their land. All these cases should be thoroughly examined before rates are levied upon the land. Taupo West, East, and South are to be exempted, but there is nothing said about the Stewart Island people. The Stewart Island Natives should be exempted, because they are on an island, and there are no roads there. I am sorry the honourable gentleman has overlooked his friends at Stewart Island. In regard to myself, it is right that rates should be levied on my land, because I reap the benefit myself: but I consider other people in this matter—the people who sent me to this House. In the North Island, lots of land have not been individualised, or gone through the Court. The people do not understand it; and it is nothing but right that the measure should be properly ventilated before it is passed. As a matter of justice, I will vote against the second reading. Although I have always supported the Government, I shall on this occasion have to oppose them, and do what I think right in the interests of the people who sent me here. Now with regard to the few remarks of the honourable member for New Plymouth. He said that this is the proper time to bring in this Bill. I must tell that honourable member that the Natives have not been properly educated to this. Unless they are educated you must not force laws upon them which they do not understand. Of course they use the roads, but then you must teach them how they are going to act. It is an old saying, "You have got to creep before you can walk." There are too many Bills brought down at once. There are Bills concerning their lands—taking them away and putting them under the Public Trustee—and there are the Rating Bill and a dozen others. If you bring forward all these Bills on the Natives you will drive them away from, instead of bringing them into unison with, the Europeans. I am not going to keep the House much longer, but I have stated my objection to the Bill, and that the Bill should have been brought forward. I say it should have been circulated before the House met, or it should be postponed until after the general election, to let honourable members place before the Natives how it is going to work and what it means. The whole thing should be properly ventilated before you bring in a Bill to make these people pay rates and taxes the same as Europeans. No doubt it is right in one way, but in another it is not. Referring the Bill to a Select Committee, they may bring it back in a different form. I am now speaking of the Bill where it touches the Natives, and I repeat again it is not right. If there is any rate to be put on, I think the colony should remember the way the land was sold to the

Crown, and the conditions. Those conditions have never been fulfilled. If they had been, no doubt the Natives would have been prepared to pay their share of the rates for land they hold; but at the present time the House knows well there are sixteen hundred of these people who are without land, and eight hundred of them averaging from five to ten acres each. Well, looking at it from that point of view, I do not think it is right this Bill should tax the Natives in the South Island. I am here to protect the Natives in the South Island. I have stated my objections to the Bill. When it goes into Committee I will move that it shall not apply to the South Island.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I think the honourable gentleman has taken a very sensible view of this measure, and I congratulate the honourable gentleman, who points out that the Natives of the South Island, at any rate, ought not to be included in the operation of that Act; and in that, I think, every one will agree with the honourable gentleman. We know that the South Island was practically parted with by the Natives for a mere song, and certain arrangements were made by us which up to the present time have never been fulfilled. After the able manner in which the honourable gentleman has defended the rights of the Natives of the South Island, I think that the Government ought to reconsider the position with regard to the South Island. Mr. Kapa also put his case in such a way that the Minister in charge of the Bill can hardly overlook the recommendations he made with regard to Native-land taxation. Personally, I have not gone into the matter as far as the North Island is concerned, but it is one the Government will require to show an amount of discretion in connection with. In many parts of the North it is only right that rates should be collected from the Natives. The honourable member for Dunedin City stated this Bill had been introduced at the instigation of some Government "faddist." I think when he made that reference to the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) he was entirely out of order. We know that honourable gentleman is an advocate of the "single tax" in this House, in season and out of season; and one of the most extraordinary things in connection with that honourable gentleman and his scheme is that he has sat perfectly silent the whole night, much as he advocates this principle on the platform—I saw him on one occasion erected on a sort of elevated scaffold on the reclaimed land—he was not hanged, but fêted by a band and with torchlights flaming; and he declared that upon every occasion upon the floor of this House, if they returned him, he would advocate the principle of a single tax. But we have had not a single word from him to-night in favour of this measure, which he has, according to the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) succeeded in inducing the Government to bring before the country. Now, Sir, ingenious as that suggestion was on the part of the honourable member for Dunedin City, he here missed

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the mark. The real instigator of the Bill, I believe, was not the honourable member for Wellington City. It ought to be called a rating Bill instigated by the Commissioner of Taxes for the Colony of New Zealand. That is the author of the Bill. Sir, we know that the Government at the present time have the officers of the various departments preparing these Bills galore—not because they care one single penny whether they become law or not, but because they wish to obscure our visions and perceptions in connection with our work. They are pouring Bills and measures by the thousand on the floor of this House, which they have not the slightest intention of making law. Why do they not select the Bills they really mean to pass, and go on with them? Now, Sir, I say the author of this Bill is the Commissioner of Taxes; and here is the key to the whole position in the report he circulated last July—twelve months ago. He says,—

"From time to time I have given full consideration to the question of the advisability of the general assessment for local bodies being made by this department. I have come to the conclusion that it is not desirable to continue the present system. It is not necessary to immediately provide another in its place, and next year would be early enough to introduce a measure."

Just twelve months ago he said next year would be quite time enough, and here we have the Bill—twelve months to a day.

"At present an immense quantity of work is done that is not required for a land-tax assessment, and this was the case, though to a less extent, under the property-tax assessment."

Here is the crux of the whole thing. It causes a great facility for assessment. Now, what has been done by the Land- and Income-tax Department regarding lands? They have been forcing up the value of lands in the country, and they found, themselves, that even those farmers who are now enjoying exemptions are feeling irritated, because the valuations of their properties are so high that they have to pay increased taxation to the local bodies; and the department has not the courage to face its own valuations. It wishes now to introduce by a side-wind this Bill, in order to save itself from the responsibility of its assessments. The report says,—

"The fact of our values being taken for local rating causes much hostility to the assessment, and consequently to any system of State taxation administered by this department."

We see clearly, therefore, that the department has not the courage to insist upon its valuations in numbers of the estates where no taxation is collected for the purposes of their Act, but where taxation is collected by the local bodies. There was a denial to-night by the Minister in charge of this Bill, when challenged by the honourable member for the Wairarapa: that honourable gentleman pointed out that it was to shift from the shoulders of the department the heavy cost, and cause the local

bodies to bear that extra infliction, and here we have it in this report:—

"If the valuation of the smaller properties were dispensed with, and rolls were not supplied to local bodies, the triennial assessment and its heavy cost might be abolished."

There you are, Sir. It is the heavy cost incurred which the department wants to get rid of, and wishes to throw on local bodies to administer. I venture to say the revenue now coming in to these local bodies is absolutely inadequate to meet their current outgoings. Yet here we have a change still further cumbering them with costs which might be, and ought properly to be, borne by the General Government. I was pointing out to the Minister—although at the time he was engaged by the editor of the principal Ministerial journal, and probably giving him a few hints as to what should appear in to-morrow morning's paper—I was pointing out that he denied this evening that the object for which this was being done was that the increased costs should be put upon the local bodies; and here we have it in this very report showing that is the reason of it. Now, we have the honourable gentleman telling us that 8d. in the pound is the assessment he intends to place upon land. He ought to know, at any rate, as Treasurer, that that is not sufficient to carry on the local operations required by these local bodies. We have the honourable member for Dunedin City telling us clearly and distinctly that that would not carry on the work for the City of Dunedin. We have this single-tax business applied by the Government, and they place in the hands of the people the option either of carrying out the old Rating Act or of carrying out the new rate upon the unimproved values. And what does that mean? It means that you will at once throw the apple of discord into every county and borough in New Zealand. What will ensue? The people who have rich land capable of great improvement will reap the advantage, while those settlers who have poor land not capable of improvement at all will derive no advantage. This, of course, will cause trouble. I do not at all believe in this principle of exempting these improvements under a system of this sort. Local rates must at present be raised on the value of the land with the improvements, and, if the question of exempting improvements is entertained, many questions arise—as to value of improvements and possible improvable quality of land. It represents wealth, and in my belief the true principle of taxation is that a person should contribute in proportion to his wealth to the revenues either of the country or of the local bodies. This is a system of exempting certain forms of wealth by placing the taxation on the unimproved values. I am glad to see the honourable gentleman is taking a note of it. I can see he has never given the question any study at all. The Bill has been entirely instigated by the department, and I venture to say that if the honourable gentleman gives these big questions a little more consideration it will be of great benefit to the colony. The Premier grunts.

That is to be expected; but a grunt will not satisfy the people of this colony. He has been tickling the ears of the colonists, and playing lately into the hands of a certain wealthy class, not caring a brass farthing how unjustly he may treat any other class of the community, so long as he gains favour with that class. The honourable gentleman regulates his taxation on this basis: "Let us ascertain the point beyond which a majority can be discovered, and we will go to that point, and sacrifice the minority so long as we can capture the votes of the majority." That is the principle that the honourable gentleman has carried out. And then, Sir, under clause 9 we are to have this 10 per cent. added upon moneys which are not due—10 per cent. is to be charged against moneys which are paid in advance. I never heard of such a thing before. I know what a commercial man would say under circumstances of this sort. I have briefly treated the question of placing on the local bodies an increased burden which they are entirely unable to bear, and the department need not think they will divest themselves of the responsibility of still adhering to the high valuations they have been imposing in the past. Then, we are to send the Bill to the Local Bills Committee and other Committees.

Mr. SEDDON.—No.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I understand that it is so.

Mr. SEDDON.—A special Committee.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—If the Premier had been in his place—and I regret to say he is not in his place as often as he ought to be—he would have heard the Treasurer state clearly and distinctly that this Bill was to go before the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. SEDDON.—That portion of it that refers to Native lands.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—Just so. But what this side of the House, at all events, expects is, not that the Committees of the House should bring in legislation, but that the Government themselves, during the whole period of the recess, should devote themselves to preparing their legislation. It is far better that they should do that than that the Premier should be gallivanting on the West Coast, banqueting at all times and seasons—far better, I say, to attend to the legislation of the country, and have it properly prepared, so that they may be prepared to bring down the legislation they wish to pass when the House meets. Let them not break us down with unnecessary work by bringing in twenty or thirty times more measures than they expect to pass, thereby interfering with the work we are ready to go on with. For my part, I consider the measure is wholly unnecessary, except as applied to Native lands, and a special Bill should have dealt with that subject. It is no doubt framed, as I have said, at the instigation of the Commissioner of Taxes, in the first instance, and, secondly, to please the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean), by carrying out his principle of the single tax. But I would ask that honourable

gentleman, what will he do with a number of premises in this city? In the case of the D.I.C. Company, for instance: Will he let them off, and simply charge them on the value of the land, without charging them at all on that vast structure they have erected upon it?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—The Minister of Labour seems to be entirely forgetting the fact that the late Premier—the honourable gentleman whose policy he and his colleagues profess so much to approve of—a little time ago instanced that very D.I.C. Company in this town, and asked, “Would it not be unjust to permit a wealthy company like that to entirely escape taxation on their premises, and only to tax the land?” But this Bill is not to tax capital at all; it is only taxing a portion of a person's capital. Yet the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) sits there; and I venture to say that when the Bill goes into Committee he will no more fight for the single tax being applied to municipal property than I should do. In theory it is a beautiful scheme, but in practice the honourable member will abandon it, as he has abandoned many other things in this House. The only thing he does not abandon is the making of attacks upon his fellow-members in this House.

Mr. McLEAN.—I only rise to say that I wish the honourable gentleman to withdraw the statement he has made. I have never attacked any of my colleagues in the House. I have always defended them.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE.—I cannot withdraw the statement, as you, Sir, know it to be perfectly true.

Mr. McGOWAN.—The honourable gentleman who has just sat down appears to know extremely well the motives of Ministers, but I must say the speech he has made with reference to this matter carries a little more abuse than argument. I consider that this is one of the most important Bills brought down to the House this session, because it introduces two new and very important measures—that is to say, the suggestion for the rating of Native lands, and the proposal for an alteration in the rating of property for local purposes. These are two very important measures, and even should the Bill not become law this session great good will be done by the discussion of these measures, and by the improvements that no doubt will be made upon them in Committee. It must not be forgotten, Sir, in connection with the great portion of the expense that has been referred to, which the local bodies are to be put to in reference to the preparing of rolls for the valuation of property, that a great many local bodies are already put to that expense. They prepare their own local rolls, and consequently the argument as to the expense that they will be forced to bear under this Bill falls to the ground; and I think, with reference to the county property-tax valuation, where the argument as to expense would have come in, that may wait. I

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was interested in listening to the honourable member for Ellesmere. I think he referred to the adoption of such a principle as this, and gave instances of how it would work, mentioning two quarter-acre sections, one having a large building on it of considerable value, and which would have no more to pay than the adjoining section of the poor man who paid on the poor property he had. I consider the honourable gentleman hardly thought out that example, because if he had thought it out he would have carried it further, and would have given instances in which a man holding a quarter-acre section may spend a good deal of money upon it—may, in fact, spend upon it the savings of a lifetime—while another man who holds the adjoining section for speculative purposes may hold it and enjoy the benefit of the expenditure of his neighbour. That is the true ultimate result of carrying out an example of that kind. The other clauses he referred to—namely, as to the amount of discount for the payment of rates—seem to be entirely in favour of the wealthy man, because we all know, who have any experience of boroughs, that it is not the poor people who are able to pay first; consequently, the giving of a discount for paying early would have this result: The wealthy people, who would be in a position to pay early, would receive the advantage of the discount, and the poor people, who had been struggling the whole year before to pay their rates, would not receive that benefit. Consequently that advantage which the honourable gentleman sought to prove by his example falls to the ground. I listened with very great pleasure and interest to the speeches of the honourable gentlemen who represent the Natives, and I must say there is a good deal in what they have said. At the same time, I noticed this: that these gentlemen, and the Natives whom they represent, are always ready to take advantage of the laws of the Europeans when there is nothing to pay. They then say, “Let us be governed by equal laws.” But where it is a question of paying money we never find the Natives admit that they should pay it. They like to keep from paying money if possible; and in that respect I do not think the Natives are different from the Europeans. The honourable member for the Southern Maori District, I think, spoke of this Bill coming on too soon, and said that the Natives should have some information of measures of this kind might know something about them before they were brought forward, so that they became law. We have always found that the demands for the payment of rates for any purposes come upon us too soon. The objections that I have heard urged against this Bill can be dealt with in Committee, because they are not objections mainly to the principle, but more to particular clauses; they have reference to the minutiae of the Bill. The main elements, I say, are here. I am not prepared to say that this is the proper time when the Bill should be brought in, but I certainly think the Government deserves the thanks, and will

have the thanks, of the country for introducing this measure. As we know, in the poorer districts, where the Europeans have to make roads over hills and dales in most difficult country, it is only right that they should be able—as they are not at present—to rate the Native lands. The unfortunate settlers are taxed up to the hilt, and feel the difficulty of this position; and the local bodies have been repeatedly crying out for the power of rating Native lands. For that reason, I am very much pleased to see that the Government have introduced a Bill of this character. I have no doubt that the clauses relating to the change in the method of valuing by the local bodies will create a good deal of discussion, and I have no doubt also there is room for it. That is all I intend to say at the present time.

Mr. MCGUIRE.—I am well pleased indeed to see a measure of this kind introduced, and I may say that it is not introduced before it is required, more especially with reference to Native land. This Native land, of course, contributes nothing whatever to the local revenue. The Natives use our roads and bridges, and the unfortunate settler has to provide the ways and means to construct and to keep the roads in order. This, in my opinion, is neither right nor just. The Natives are reaping great benefits from the expenditure of money contributed by the settlers; they are receiving large rentals from their lands; they are receiving money for flax, and other things, and, at the same time, they derive as great a benefit from these local works as the settlers who have to maintain the roads; and yet they do not contribute one shilling to the cost of construction or maintenance. The Bill, if passed will do away with this state of things, and I maintain that it is absolutely necessary, in justice to all parties, that this Bill should become law. Again, under this Bill it will be found that the Natives can get their land individualised, and they will be able to get leases of the land themselves, so that they may be able to put themselves in an independent position, instead of working in common as at present. At present the Native who worked early and late on the co-operative principle does not receive any encouragement for his industry. Such a state of things is not equitable or just to the energetic. This Bill will alter that state of things, and put the Natives in a better position than they have ever been in before. There are also clauses in the Bill which make all who derive benefit from the expenditure of the rates of the local bodies contribute to those rates; and this, I think, is a step in the right direction. I think that the Native lands deriving a benefit from the expenditure of the local body should certainly pay rates; for it is well known that a large area of Native land is so benefited. The honourable member who represents the Natives of the South Island said the Natives were not educated up to this matter. But I trust this Bill will be passed through the House, and that will soon educate them in this direction. I think if they look at it themselves they will

see that the Bill is in the interests of the people generally, and that the Natives have as good a right to pay for the roads as others. So far as this country is concerned, they have been treated fairly and honestly; and, indeed, seeing the amount of money they receive for their lands in the North Island, and the rents they are getting, they are the only persons who, and without any effort on their part, are in a good financial position. I am glad, also, to see that the Road Boards and County Councils will have the option of rating on the unimproved value of land if they think proper. I think this is really in the interest of local bodies, because it is well known that those who work early and late to improve their farms have to pay more than those who do nothing, and I think it will be far better, and in the interests of all parties, that the lands should be rated on the unimproved value, particularly country land. Now in reference to the Natives: I ask, why should they not pay? Do they not use the Queen's highway? Then, why should they not contribute to its maintenance? Sir, it is absolutely necessary, because it is impossible in those districts where Natives are numerous for the white settlers to maintain the roads and bridges. I am sorry nothing has been done yet in the matter of divisional fencing, because that is one of the things I have advocated ever since I have been in the House: it is a great hardship on those who live next to Natives to have to make all the divisional fencing. This, to my mind, is a great injustice, because the Natives are as able to do their share as the Europeans, and therefore they should do it. I trust at an early date something will be done also in this direction. However, we must move along slowly but surely, and secure every inch of ground. So far as the Bill is concerned, I shall certainly support its second reading.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I do not think it is necessary to discuss this Bill at present, as it has to be referred to a Select Committee; but I wish to make a few remarks in reference to the speeches made by the Native members. I have always noticed that when a Bill is brought into the House that in any way affects Native lands they are always anxious to have the measure postponed; it is always, "*Taihoa, taihoa, taihoa*." They are never ready; they do not understand paying rates, and they never will understand paying rates until they are obliged to do so. I have no doubt that when the rate-collector comes to visit their dwellings in the same way as those of Europeans they will very soon understand all about paying rates. But I cannot help thinking, on looking at Part II. of this Bill, that their objections to it were raised unnecessarily. I do not see anything in the Bill to frighten the Native owners. If I read it correctly it is not going to call upon the Natives to pay rates to any great extent. I am afraid this Bill has been brought in merely for the sake of appearances. So far as I can read it, it is not going to tax Native lands at all. That is the view I take of it. In clause 14, under exemptions of land, it says,—

"There shall be excepted from rating under this part of this Act all Native land.—

"(1.) Situate within the Counties of Ka-whia, Taupo West, Taupo East, Sounds, and Fiord; or

"(2.) Situate more than five miles from any public road or highway open for horse-traffic; or

"(3.) Situate outside of any borough or town district, and which is occupied solely by Natives, and upon which their houses or whares are erected, but not exceeding ten acres in extent in any case; or

"(4.) Situate within any borough or town district, and which is occupied solely by Natives, and which, owing to the indigent circumstances of the occupiers, or for other special reason, the Governor shall think should be exempted; or

"(5.) Which may from time to time be declared by the Governor in Council to be exempted therefrom; or"—

And now comes the worst feature of the whole Bill:—

"(6.) The title to which has not been ascertained through the Native Land Court, and of which there is not an occupier as defined in section eleven of this Act."

Now, if any one will read the Bill carefully and see what "occupier" means, he will see that the whole thing, so far as rating Native lands is concerned, is a mockery and a sham. Clause 11 says that—

"'Occupier,' in respect of Native lands, means and includes—

"(a.) Any person, not being a Native, who is in actual or beneficial occupation or in receipt of the rents and profits of any land over which the Native title has not been extinguished."

So that you will see that all Native lands, unless occupied by a person who is not a Native, pay no rates. So that my honourable friends on the other side who are objecting to the introduction of the Bill need not trouble their heads over it at all. It is not intended to tax Native lands. It is simply brought in with a view of amusing some of us who represent constituencies in the North, where there is a large amount of Native lands lying idle, so that we may be under the impression that the Native lands were going to be taxed. The whole thing is a piece of sham. And then I come to another part of the Bill, which is worse again. Subsection (b) of clause 11 specifies,—

"Any person entitled by virtue of any deed, agreement, or license, for any period exceeding twelve months from the date thereof, to cut or remove timber from Native land, whether or not the Native title thereto has been extinguished,—

—shall be liable to pay rates. So that any person who enters into an agreement with the Natives to cut or remove timber from their lands immediately becomes liable to pay rates on those lands as if he were the owner. Surely the Go-

vernment do not know what they are doing; and whoever drafted the Bill knows nothing about Native lands, and should never draft another. The whole thing is the greatest nonsense you could possibly put together. Then, it goes on, in subsection (c),—

"Any Native who is in actual or beneficial occupation, or in receipt of the rents and profits, of any land over which the Native title has been extinguished by the Native Land Court"—

—shall also be liable to pay rates. But where is any Native occupying land in that position? I do not know of one. There may be such in Wellington, but, speaking as far as I know, I do not know of a Native in such a position that he would be called upon under the Bill to pay rates. Then, again, if you are going to compel people who buy the right of cutting timber on Native lands to pay local rates, you at the same time allow others to lease large areas of gum-lands in the North, and extract enormous revenues in the shape of gum; and they destroy the roads, and yet they do not contribute one farthing to the local rates. It is impossible to read the Bill without coming to the conclusion that the person who drafted these clauses knew nothing about Native lands. The whole Bill, in its present shape, is not worth wasting five minutes' discussion on. You may send it to the Native Affairs Committee; of course the Native members will object to anything. If the words "taxation" and "Native lands" appear in this Bill it will be sufficient for them, and they will talk for a month over it. But I can assure the representatives of the Natives in this House that the Bill will do them no injury at all. So far as it applies to Native lands, the whole thing is a sham and a mockery. So far as the other portion of the Bill is concerned, it is going before a Select Committee, and I do not wish to discuss it now. But I am surprised—listening to some honourable members discussing its operation, I could not help coming to the conclusion that they had never read it. Unless the whole of Part II. is completely altered, it may as well be struck out of the Bill.

Mr. WILSON.—I have a good many Committee objections to the Bill, but I will not trouble the House with them just now. I entirely disagree with clause 2, which I think operates against local bodies, and will increase their expenditure very much. I think the latter portion is good, as it provides for rating on unimproved values. It is a very happy thought of the Minister to make this portion of it optional, and subject to a vote of the rate-payers before it can be brought into operation. I should like, however, to point out what I think is a mistake, and that is that, when you compare the amounts that are going to be levied under the unimproved value, they are very different in the cases of the town and of the country. If you levy in the country a penny-halfpenny rate, as at present, on the improved value, you get £536,280 as the rate for all over the colony; if you levy a rate of 3d., as the Bill provides, on the unimproved value,

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you get £723,502—that is, £200,000 more. Of course, it is optional on the part of the ratepayers whether they levy the rate or not; but 2½d. on the unimproved value is the same as 1½d. on the improved value—£560,252. When you compare this with the towns it is curious how it comes out. In the town, if you levy 1½d. on the improved value you get £227,452, and if you take 8d. on the unimproved value you get almost exactly the same—£223,845; so you do not increase the rates by this in any way at all in the towns, while you do by £200,000 in the country, if the proposals in the Bill are carried. I think that when the measure goes into Committee this ought to be gone into carefully; and, although, of course, as I say, it is optional on the part of the ratepayers whether they levy this rate or not, still I think it is too much rating-power to give to Road Boards and counties, and when the Bill comes into Committee I shall draw attention to this and try to get it altered.

Dr. NEWMAN.—Sir, I think this Bill has been drawn up by the Minister in a very great hurry, and under the pressure of a great deal of other business; otherwise we should not have had a Bill which I cannot help characterizing as somewhat slovenly. I think that in any Rating Bill that is introduced we should have a clause providing—and I wish to draw attention to this now—a minimum rate for land. The policy of asking people to pay twopence or threepence on a section of land is useless, because by the time the county has sent out notices, *et cetera*, the whole amount of the rate is gone. It seems to me, if a man has a section at all he should be subject to a minimum rate of sixpence or a shilling, and that would leave something for the cost of collecting. But there are cases where the cost of collecting would be considerably greater than the rate collected, and it would be cheaper to leave the matter altogether in abeyance than to go to the cost of collecting; and that seems to me to be a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. As regards a great deal of the Bill, I think it is very generous of Ministers to bring in a Bill for further rating, and also a North of Auckland highway-taxing Bill, and various other taxing measures which are scattered up and down their policy. But, from what I know of the country, the county revenues are up to the hilt, and County Councillors hardly know how to make both ends meet. What they want is not greater powers of taxation, but assisted revenues and an assured finance; and that is nowhere apparent in any of the policy measures before us. When the honourable gentleman boasts a surplus of over half a million and a prospective surplus of another half-million, one might have imagined that he would help the struggling counties. It is very well to talk of the counties in the South, where they have had easy rates and large revenues in the past, and some of which hardly levy a rate; but his proposals will not suit us in the North. As regards this triennial assessment, which the honourable gentleman mentioned in his Financial Statement would be abolished, I think he

must have got his proposal to abolish it from the department, and I very greatly regret he has put that in. As a matter of fact, if the work of valuation is thrown upon the local bodies, the County Councils of this Island will be put to great additional expense. They will have to get special assistance—they will have to employ a special clerical staff, and they will have to incur a very large amount of expenditure for that staff. I should like to call the honourable gentleman's attention to this fact: that in Italy they are much wiser than we are here, from the plan which is here suggested. There the central Government send out documents. They send out a form for the land-tax, and also a form for the rates. Each county does not collect its own rates, but the money is collected by a central department, and they hand it back in a cheque. That is a very great saving on the present system, and it means that, instead of having two sets of clerks, and staffs, and consequently two sets of payments, they make the two into one set, with very great advantage. We, I regret to say, have a great deal too many rates, and we have got into the habit of striking new rates and special rates on every possible occasion, and the consequence is that our taxing and rates are loaded with all kinds of burdens. I should like, while condemning some parts of this Bill, to say that I sincerely approve of one clause drawn up by the Minister. That is an excellent one. As I understand it, it means that one rate-notice may be sent out. Only yesterday I got a rate-notice which contains half a dozen rates for one property; and, what with all the clerical labour in the office in sending out these notices, it is simply ridiculous. In that way we get large clerical staffs which are utterly useless, in my opinion; for this is what having so many different rates has led to. In New Jersey, according to Professor Seligman, there are no less than forty different rates. When I see the list of rates, and what we have brought them to in this colony, it seems to me to be an extraordinary number; and the result of it all is that, where a poor fellow has got a piece of land, he has to pay an ordinary rate and a special rate; and in towns he has to pay a Harbour Board rate, a charitable-aid rate, a Government Loans to Local Bodies rate; and the honourable gentlemen on those benches now propose to set up a betterment rate; and then, over and above this, there are various other special rates. There are also the land-tax and the graduated land-tax, and we have now threats of further demands of this character. If we go on at this rate we shall break the New Jersey record, where they have over forty separate taxes for every single bit of land. As regards the proposal to tax the unimproved value, that is one I should be very glad to see tried; and I think it is one which it is right should come down in the form of an optional proposal. It is an excellent arrangement. I believe that the Minister will find that it is only in the older-settled districts that it will be of any great advantage; but in the new districts it would not work well. Where half

the people are new and struggling, with few improvements, they would find it an extensive drain on their funds; and it would mean that the older-settled portions would get off paying a large amount of the tax, while in the new districts it would impose extra burdens. I am afraid that what the Minister proposes will be only indorsed in the older-settled districts. I think a trial of the system will in some cases be exceedingly satisfactory. There is nothing new in the proposal, Sir, because I find that sixty years ago, in Ohio, they had the same tax on the unimproved value of land, and the result was that the large holders found they had to pay heavy rates on their properties, and so did not hold on for the unearned increment, but sold whenever they could; so that the people went upon the land, which was previously lying idle. Those who held on to their lands had to make them more valuable by further improvements, and in that way they found a very great deal of good resulted from that proceeding. I would also point out to the Minister that he has another authority for it, because, in the last three or four years, at Hyattsville, in one of the States of America, the assessors took upon themselves to value the unimproved land at the same high rate as improved land, and, though the matter was taken before the Court of Assessors, that valuation was upheld in some cases. And now, in America, the unimproved land is gradually being rated higher than the improved land, it being, according to the opinion of the public, a scandal that large areas of land should be held in an idle state. I do not intend to take up the time of the House much longer, only I should like to make one suggestion to the Minister. In clause 18 I think there are one or two matters which might well be inserted, and which would be of value. I would suggest to him that in this province we have large areas of sand-dunes. They are a class of land which cost a great deal of money to reclaim, and these, I think, should be exempted from taxation, or from heavy rating, for a considerable time; and I think, amongst other improvements, he should put this in. I would point out to him that in France and in Denmark they are allowing men who take up and reclaim sand-dunes the use of this land for periods up to twenty-five years tax-free, or until such times as they can make some income. I would suggest that the honourable gentleman should take a note of that; if he could see his way to exempt these lands, which are now a nuisance to the neighbourhood, it would be of some use, and there would be more encouragement to people to take them up. I do not see why, if he is to exempt general improvements, he should not allow orchards, which cost a large amount of money, to be exempted from some amount of taxation. I can point to France, Belgium, and Denmark, where orchards are so numerous; they are permitted to be exempted from taxation up to ten years. The only other thing I should like to point out to the Minister is—and it is extraordinary that it should appear in the Bill we

Dr. Newman

have lately had before us,—that in clause 20 it is proposed to entirely change the system of rating by a bare majority, when in the Alcoholic Liquors Bill a change is made only by a three-fifths majority, and when half on the roll vote. It should be by a bare majority. When the proposition is in one Bill it should be in this one. I disapprove of it altogether in the one Bill. When a Bill like this is brought in we should have some reasonable provision. I do not believe the Bill will go through this House. By the time it has gone to one Committee, and by the time our Maori friends have had time to consider it, I think the end of the session will have arrived—long before that. I should like to ask the Minister the meaning of this extraordinary fact: He says that all Native lands situated within the Counties of Kawhia, Taupo West, Taupo East, Sounds, and Fiords are to be exempted from rating under the Act. In his reply he should inform us how many blocks of Maori land there are in the County of Fiord. And, in addition to that, I utterly fail to understand why, if the Natives are going to be taxed in all the rest of this Island, the honourable gentleman should exempt Kawhia, Taupo West, and Taupo East Counties. Through these counties, or through two of them at all events, something over fifty miles of the North Island Main Trunk Railway runs; and if we are to exempt those large counties we have to tax ourselves.

An Hon. MEMBER.—There are no local bodies there.

Dr. NEWMAN.—That does not matter at all; the honourable gentleman could make provision for the purpose. I fail to see why we should draw a narrow line, and say that bits of land in Taupo West should not be taxed simply because there is no machinery provided. It seems to me to be an extraordinary way of doing things. As regards the taxing of Native lands, I largely agree with the honourable member for Marsden.

Mr. PALMER.—I must say I was rather astonished to hear the honourable member for Clutha say this Bill was absolutely unnecessary, and that it was absurd to alter the law from what it is at the present time. If that contention was correct, Sir, then the present law of rating is a just law. And what is the present law? It is a rate on the improved value of land, which lets off the men who will not cultivate their lands. Take, for example, the case of A and B, who have a piece of land of 50 acres each opposite to one another. Mr. A is a good colonist, and works hard and improves his land. His land, which was worth £50 originally, is improved by his tilling the soil, and a house is put up, and he cultivates it generally, so that ultimately the land is worth about £500. The other man, Mr. B, whose land is worth the same amount originally, does nothing to his land. He allows furze and noxious weeds to grow all over it, and it goes down in value to £30. How do we treat these two colonists in this Bill, and how have they been treated in the past? In the past the Government has said, "Mr. A, you have been a good colonist and

worked hard, and improved and increased the producing-power of your land, and for that we are going to tax you 1½d. in the pound on your value of £500: that is £2 8s. 6d. You are fined this sum for being a good colonist." Then the Government goes to the other man, Mr. B, and says, "You have been a lazy man; you have been a bad colonist, and an injury to the district in which you live; and for that we will make you pay a rate of 1½d. in the pound on your value of £30: that is 3s. 9d. You are let off with a fine of only 3s. 9d. for being lazy and a bad colonist." What encouragement is given under our present law to the industrious settler? I think the present law, when we come to look at it, absurd; and I wonder that the people of New Zealand have so long submitted to punishment in this way. I am astonished to hear the honourable member for Clutha say that the present law is quite right, and that such a tax does not require to be altered. By this Bill we no longer tax industry, but we compel improvements to be effected in order that taxation may be paid. I think the Government deserve the thanks of the whole community for having brought in such a Bill. I hope this Bill is going to pass this session, and that it will not be burked or slaughtered among the innocents. I hope the Government will push it forward in every possible way. As the honourable member for the Thames said, I think the Government will get the thanks of the whole community for bringing in this Bill. I am getting letters from local bodies every day, expressing hope that the Bill will be pushed on. With regard to clause 20, which was spoken of just now, the honourable member for the Hutt said he would like to see this carried by a majority. I will read from a letter I have received, which says,—

"As you are undoubtedly aware, in a great many of the districts north of Auckland the absentees predominate. If the Bill is left in its present form it will be impossible to bring it into force in these districts, and the *bona fide* settler who improves his holding will still be punished for his industry and enterprise. This principle of taxing improvements has been a bar to progress in country districts, and has inflicted a great hardship on the industrious settlers who improve their holdings, and thereby advance their districts. We sincerely trust that, now this vicious principle is about repelled, the new Bill will be framed so that it can be applied to every district. If it is not possible to make it compulsory, the majority of the votes recorded at the poll should decide the question—not the majority on the roll, for the absentee who does not record his vote is reckoned against."

Sir, as there are so many absentees it would be impossible in many of the districts to bring the section into force if section 20 is left in the condition in which it is now. In regard to what the honourable member for the Hutt said as to the extra expense in view of this valuation, I would point out that there would be less expenditure than previously to the Govern-

ment, or to the local bodies, because the cost of the valuation of the land is made upon the unimproved value. It is not likely to improve; so that really, in regard to the cost for the whole colony, it would be less in assessing the value in this case than it was in the other. In regard to the clauses of the Bill affecting Native land, and what the honourable member for Marsden said, I do not agree with the whole of his remarks. I do not think he meant them to apply to the whole Bill. He meant, I think, to apply what he said to Part II. of the Bill, and I think he did not explain what he really meant. The honourable member assures me that that is what he did mean. You are exempting every bit of Native land in the Colony of New Zealand, and you will really have no taxation on Native land at all. Although I do not agree with the Bill, I think the amendments suggested are Committee amendments, and I should like the honourable gentleman to say that he will give the Bill every assistance, and endeavour in Committee to make this Bill more workable than it is at the present time with regard to Native lands—to make of it a thoroughly good Bill, and endeavour to force it through. I believe, if the honourable gentleman does that, and lends his assistance, the Minister will probably give way on the last clauses, and we shall get the Bill through this House, and the result will be that we shall get a fair amount of taxation from the Native lands. I will give the Government all the assistance I can in getting the Bill through this House.

Mr. MOORE.—I may say that I listened with very great attention to the Colonial Treasurer, who introduced this Bill, but I cannot say at the same time that it afforded me a considerable amount of pleasure. The honourable gentleman, when introducing the Bill, never touched upon the principle of the Bill at all. He simply explained the principal clauses. But I maintain that this is a Bill with a considerable amount of principle: in fact, I may say that this is a policy Bill; and I think we ought to have had some explanation of the principle it contained from the honourable member in introducing it. The Bill, of course, provides for a complete change in the incidence of taxation—that is, so far as our local taxation is concerned. It also makes some provision for taxing the Native lands—two very important principles indeed. I think it was to be expected, Sir, that the honourable gentleman would give the House some reasons for these two new departures. All that the honourable gentleman did was to explain some of the clauses; but, as far as the principle of the Bill is concerned, I think the House has had no explanation, and I notice that very few members who have spoken have touched upon the principle of the Bill at all. We have had no members on the other side supporting it at all, in fact. I myself do not intend to vote against it on the second reading if a division is called for, as there are some parts of the Bill which I approve of. And I hardly know whether to look upon the honourable gentle-

man who spoke last, and who supported the Bill, as a supporter of the Government or not. He speaks and, I think, he votes as often against the Government as he does with them. The honourable member is looked upon as a staunch Government supporter, but he has voted against the Government on several occasions. I listened to the speech of the honourable member for the Thames with very great pleasure. He stated there were two very important principles in the Bill, and one of those principles he agreed with—that was, the exemption of improvements in local taxation; and he instanced a case where two owners might each have a quarter-acre section. One might be largely improved, and a man might be living on his quarter-acre section. His neighbour, who might not have spent anything, expects to get an additional value on his property from the money spent by his neighbour in improving his. I would point out to the honourable gentleman this: that probably the person who spent a large amount of money in erecting buildings upon his property did so expecting to carry on a large business. He would probably require to make use of the roads, made out of rates, with his horses and conveyances in connection with his business; therefore he ought, in fairness, to pay more in taxation than the person who owns the other quarter-acre section, and who has derived so much less benefit from the expenditure of the rates than the person carrying on the large business. Therefore I think his argument a poor one, in view of the fact that the person who spent his money would do it in increasing his business, and therefore he would pay more rates—on which the local bodies depend. Very great exception was taken by the honourable member for the Southern Maori District to Native lands in the South Island being taxed. We know that the Natives in the South Island are poor as compared with those in the North Island. They are small in number, and not in anything like as good a position as the Natives in the North Island. But I do not think the Natives in the South Island would be taxed very much under this Bill. The exemptions are very many, and, although this is a Bill to impose a certain amount of taxation on those lands, this taxation will be very low indeed. Lands held by Natives five miles from a main road are exempted; and, with reference to the North Island, the Act states that all Native land situate within the Counties of Kawhia, Taupo West, and Taupo East is to be exempted from taxation. We in the South Island do not know the reason the Government have for exempting all these lands in the North. I think the honourable member in charge of the Bill should have given us his reasons for exempting all the Native lands in these counties. I think we should have had some information from him as to the reason of the Government in proposing to exempt these lands. There should be sufficient reasons and information given to the House. I hope the honourable gentleman in his reply will give the House the information I now ask for. It may

Mr. Moore

be that there are no local bodies in the districts named, and it may not be necessary, therefore, to tax these lands, but still I think we ought to know the reasons the Government have for exempting them. The Bill gives power to the Governor by Order in Council to revoke any Order in Council made exempting Native land from rating, but I think that if we introduce legislation to impose taxation upon Native land we ought not to leave it in the hands of the Governor to say what amount of land should be taxed. I think the previous Minister had quite enough power, without placing further power in a Minister's hands, and especially so large a power as this. I think we ought to set out clearly what we intend to do in the shape of taxation, and not leave it in the hands of any individual Minister to say that these proposals are to be carried out or not. I should like to say that, so far as the exemption of improvements is concerned, I am entirely opposed to their not being taxed. This is just in the direction of the single tax—the land-tax pure and simple. We know of two members of this House who may be looked upon as disciples of Henry George, and who have used every effort in this direction. The Government, doubtless, are willing to assist them in this direction. The honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) has repeatedly stated in this House that he desired to see all taxation placed upon the land. Well, it may suit him, as representing a city constituency, to have the land alone taxed and improvements exempted, but I think it will not suit the country generally. I think it would be very much fairer to have a property-tax, whether upon improvements or upon land. Then, Sir, I notice that the Government propose to place an additional taxation of 10 per cent. on persons leaving their rates unpaid for three months. I think some fine should be imposed on those who show neglect in paying their rates, but I think that 10 per cent. is too much. If it were reduced to 5 per cent. it would be ample, and I think it would effect the object desired. We do not wish to make the taxation any heavier than we can possibly help. It seems to me only right that some fine should be paid if the tax is not paid by a certain day of the month. I have no desire to speak on the Bill at any particular length. I will reserve my right to vote in Committee against some of the clauses it contains; and outside of that I shall assist the honourable gentleman in charge to try to get the Bill passed through. I think there are some good features in the Bill, but at the same time I shall reserve to myself the right of opposing it as regards certain clauses. I hope the Minister, in his reply, will give some reasons for exempting these Native lands I have referred to, and that he will say something on this subject, as I presume he must see that these exemptions will have a certain effect on taxation as far as the local bodies are concerned.

Mr. LAKE.—I would not say anything on this Bill, as it is going to a Committee, but for the fact that I have been written to by

some of the County Councils in my district asking me to propose an amendment; and when the Bill is in Committee, if the amendment is not made before, I shall move that section 31 of the Rating Act be repealed. The object of that section is perfectly evident, and it has already been alluded to by more than one member of this House. From the fact that in some districts the amount of rates is generally excessively small, we have a difficulty in carrying out the provision which is imposed by section 31 of the Rating Act, by which you cannot recover the rates after two years have passed. In fact, in some districts in the Waikato there are small holdings where, especially in Government paper townships, the rate is so small that it is not worth collecting annually from absentees by post, as the cost would eat up the rate: and yet the owner ought not to escape. I have referred to this not with a view of drawing attention to this matter in particular, but to point out one or two little slips that have occurred in the Bill. No doubt they will be removed; they are more of the nature of Committee objections: still, I think they might just as well be mentioned. The object of the Bill has been very well expressed by the Native member who spoke. He stated, as far as I was able to tell, that the Bill should be left until after the general election. This is probably what was meant by the Government. In their Financial Statement the Government said that it was desirable to tax Native lands. They also told us that they intended to bring in a Rating Bill making it legal to assess rates on unimproved values, and doing away with the valuation for local bodies at Government expense. Well, now the Bill has come down, and, as far as I can see, the main and principal element of it—this Part II., dealing with Native lands—is an utter sham from beginning to end. It has already been alluded to by a member for one of the northern districts, and he has very properly pointed out that, to a very great extent, it would not touch the Natives: in fact, the only Natives who will be affected are some in the Waikato with Crown grants, and that will practically advance us no further than we were before. As to the exemption of Kawhia, Taupo, and such districts, the honourable gentlemen who objected to that are Southerners, and they do not remember that these districts are always carefully excepted in the Counties and Road Boards Acts, for there is no local body to collect the rates, and there is not likely to be for some time. As to the question raised by the honourable member for the Hutt, he forgets that, although the Government have spent enormous sums of money for the making of railroads, they have taken a railroad into a part of the colony where there is no settlement, and where they have by Proclamation locked up the whole country; and the railway is of no benefit to the Natives, who practically make no use of it, and it can hardly be expected, therefore, that they should pay rates for a railroad which is of no benefit to them. I have made two or three notes

on the Bill, which I will offer simply for what they are worth. Section 2 has already been alluded to, and I will therefore say nothing about that; and the contradiction in section 3 has been alluded to by the honourable member for Ellesmere. Subsection (5) of section 2 does not agree with the side-notes. That, of course, is a matter which the Committee to which the Bill is to be referred can alter, but it is evident that the Act of 1876 does not refer to capital value. Section 4 is, as far as I can see, simply put in for the creation of a system of fogot-voting far more than is already done. At the present moment, when we have six months' occupation before the name of a man can be put on the roll, the system is bad enough, for fogot-voting is largely indulged in now; but the effect of this new proposal will be to create a large number of fogot votes, which, no doubt, may be found useful under certain circumstances. With regard to section 8, I have only to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that it is just possible the wording of this section, which provides for making rates a first charge upon the land, and which I do not object to, may clash with the section in the Public Works Act that deals with cutting gorse, which is also made a charge on the land, and I do not quite see why it should practically be put out of its position by this amendment. As to section 9, I would only suggest that it would be far more desirable to add to the tax simply, as has been done under the land- and income-tax. It is not a question of "at the rate of," but simply, at a certain time, to add 10 per cent. There is nothing new in this matter. Ten per cent. is already charged whenever a local body sues and recovers judgment for rates. When the land is afterwards sold, the local body gets 10 per cent. on the rates, and I cannot see, myself, that there is any harm done. As a matter of fact, rates may be sued for after fourteen days from the time they are made, and I think an owner has but himself to blame if he ever gets charged with this tax, while it may be of considerable use to local bodies who have to sue for their rates, and perhaps sell the land. Section 10 has been objected to; but I believe, as far as I am aware, it has always been the case—that a man's name continues on the rate-roll and he has to pay the rates until he takes it off. Self-interest is the principal inducement to inform the local body of a sale, and I think in that case the law is quite strong enough as it is, without any amendment. It has been pointed out that in the clauses that bring in unimproved value—a separate system of rating—there are some very serious difficulties involved in the mode in which the unimproved value is brought in. It would be quite impossible, at any rate in districts north of the King-country, to ever bring that in, owing to the number of absentees on the roll. Perhaps that is not very much to be regretted, but I may point this out: that in the case of counties a three-fifths majority of those on the roll, and in the case of Road Boards an abso-

lute majority, is required, and I can only assure the honourable gentleman, from my own personal experience of local bodies for some years, it would be impossible to obtain such a majority anywhere north of the King-country. As regards rating on the unimproved value, I am quite well aware that in my district, and in other parts I have been in, a feeling in that direction has existed, when, perhaps, some person has, for speculative purposes, invested in a very large area of land, and practically blocked settlement for years. There are great difficulties in the way of carrying out this system, for Nature has unfortunately given us in New Zealand a large area of bad land, which is practically unimprovable to any great extent—at any rate, unimprovable to the profit of the purchaser. In the district in which I reside I think it would not be objected to, because it would simply be an inducement to those who generally improve to improve the more. As regards the section which I have mentioned I would bring up in Committee, I can see no reason for the limitation of the time for the recovery of rates; and I cannot see why the statutory limitation should be restricted to two years. As regards the rating of Native lands, I am very sorry the Government, so far as they have gone, have not seen their way to make a further step in advance. I can assure them that, after all the exceptions have been made, there will be exceedingly little Native land to be leased. I think that before we put a tax on Native land we should first of all take away all the unjust taxes which they are at present submitted to. If Native lands are to be taxed like European lands they should be placed on the same footing as European lands in other ways. Only the other day we had an enactment brought in here which was practically a great injustice to the Natives: I mean the renewal in the Stamp Act Amendment Bill of the 10-per-cent. tax on the purchase or lease of their lands. If we are to make the Natives pay rates, we ought to put them on the same footing as other owners of land.

Mr. DUTHIE.—I know my honourable colleague for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) feels warmly on the principle of rating on unimproved value, but, while impatient to speak on a subject so dear to him, he has refrained all the evening—shall I say, out of courtesy towards me? However, to open a way for him, I shall offer only a few remarks. The honourable member for Dunedin City, in speaking to this question as affecting the cities, so exactly expressed my ideas that I do not intend to repeat what has been said before. As far as Native legislation is concerned, the honourable member for Mataura and the honourable member for Marsden also exactly stated what strikes me in connection therewith. I would only correct the honourable member for Egmont in one matter—that is, where he points out an instance of the fact that the Natives are receiving large rentals from lands occupied by Europeans while paying no rates. That at least is not a fair charge, because the Europeans in occupation of these lands are paying

rates, and the land is thus contributing. I recognise there are claims which I hope will be speedily fairly enforced; but until the Natives get titles, and are enabled thereby to enter into beneficial occupation of their lands, it is not fair that they should be rated. I do think it is to be regretted there are not more active steps taken to determine and individualise such titles, and let settlement progress. The important matter in the Bill, so far as it affects town members, is this proposal to rate on unimproved value. I do not think we are suffering any injustice under the present system. It has been alleged by one speaker that the town occupier who improves his land is at present unjustly treated. I do not want to bring private affairs before the House, but I will quote my own case. If I employ horses and carts on the streets in carrying on my business I receive value for the rates I pay, and I do not think any injustice is done to me because some adjoining section remains unimproved. The towns in a new country are of a larger area than present requirements demand. Every one cannot build. The whole town cannot be forced into occupation prematurely. Vacant allotments will be built upon as soon as there is need for it. When the rentals get high there is a demand for dwelling-houses, and building consequently takes place; and you cannot build the whole of these colonial towns until such times as the necessities of the country really require it. There is no need for aiming specially, by way of local taxation, at unoccupied sections, for these sections are paying rates according to the benefit they receive. They pay rates towards loans for street-construction; they pay rates for drainage; they pay water-rates, although not the same rate, but, still, higher in proportion than the man who receives benefit from it. Upon the whole, unimproved sections contribute their fair share of rates, and I do not think there is any injustice existing, and therefore there is no reason for redress. Then, I dislike very much this proposal to submit this question to the ratepayers. It is not the class of question that should be submitted to a vote of the ratepayers. We sit here as representatives of the people to determine such questions. There are many questions—such, for instance, as the liquor traffic—that might be fairly put to the ratepayers, seeing that the reasons for and against are of a different character; but technical questions, the merits of which are not appreciated by the average ratepayer, should be decided by the representatives of the people. I do not wish to take up the time of the House at this hour; but I wish to say, as a town representative, that I do not think any departure from the present system of rating is fair to the local bodies or fair to the creditors, since local bodies have large public debts, and any disturbance of the basis of security must materially affect our borrowing-powers and the value of our debentures. If we alter the basis of security for borrowed moneys, and are continually chopping and changing

Mr. Lake

about with every "fad" and cry started, then we say that feeling of security which would enable us to borrow cheaply, and carry out those improvements which are essential and necessary in the cities of a new country. I regret that this Bill has been introduced. No one can ever expect to see it go on the statute-book. The fact that the Treasurer in proposing it knew nothing about its merits,—that he could not offer reasons in support of the Bill, but merely read out the clauses,—was evidence he had given no consideration to it. I do not see why such Bills are brought forward to waste our time. If we are here merely to fill up time, then this Bill serves its purpose very well, for we have now had three or four hours of meaningless talk, from which no practical results are likely to ensue. There are some ninety-odd Bills on the Order Paper, and if we are to go on in this way we shall not get away until long after Christmas. Really I think it is time the Government made a selection of such Bills as they intend to carry to some practical result, and let us settle down to consider them and get on with the legislation of the country. We all know that this is simply wasting time. The House has been empty almost from the time the Bill was introduced; there has barely been a quorum present, and the debate has been languidly dragged out. I trust that the Government will not waste further time, but bring forward those measures which require to be dealt with, and that we shall then confine our attention to the consideration of those measures.

Mr. McLEAN.—The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) stated most distinctly that this Bill was brought forward by the Colonial Treasurer at the instance of one or two "faddists," and he indicated that I was at the bottom of this Bill. I desire to assure the House that I have not approached any member of the Government, or any member of the Government party, or any official, in connection with this measure this year, and it is not fair that I should be charged with pulling the strings in regard to this Bill. At the same time it has my hearty support, and I shall support it all the way through. I think it is one of the best measures which the Government have brought in this session. I shall not deal with the Native aspect of the question, nor with the Second Part of the Bill, because there are many country members who are able to do that, and members from Native districts have dealt with the part of the measure relating to Native lands. My honourable colleague says this has been a wasted night. I should like to ask, who wasted the time? Certainly not honourable members on this side. I do not believe the members on this side have occupied half an hour altogether. Therefore, if there has been any waste of time it is chargeable to the Opposition. With regard to the Bill, and especially that part of it relating to the cities, what does it ask the cities to do? First, the Mayor may, upon a requisition sent by twenty ratepayers—I believe that number is too small, and I should be quite willing

that it should be increased to fifty or even a hundred—but twenty ratepayers may ask the Mayor to direct a vote of the ratepayers to be taken as to whether this Bill shall be brought into operation. I think the first thing that should be done is this: Upon an application of a sufficient number of ratepayers—say, fifty from each ward, or even a hundred from each ward—calling upon the Mayor to call a public meeting, the same as might be done in calling a public meeting to consider a special loan, a public meeting could be held for the purpose of bringing this Bill into operation. The measure could be discussed at the public meeting, and the people may oppose the matter going any further; but, supposing the public meeting approved of the further consideration of the matter, then a vote would be taken of the whole of the ratepayers. Surely no one can be more interested than the ratepayers. It affects the pocket of each one of them, and they are the best judges whether it is advisable to bring this Bill into operation or not. Then, you must bear in mind that some of these ratepayers are paying heavy rates, and have five, four, three, or two votes each. Those now paying the largest amount of rates would be the persons most likely to be affected, and who would attend the public meeting, and these are the persons, I should say, who are the best judges of whether this form of rating would be the best form or not. The honourable gentleman was good enough to refer to the D.I.C., and he made the statement that the late Premier, Mr. Ballance, asked, Was it fair that the D.I.C., a company holding large property in buildings and stock in this city, should only be asked to pay an equal sum with men holding a small section of land here? I ask this: Is it right that the D.I.C. on one side of the street should pay a certain amount whilst a like quantity of land on the other side is only paying half the amount?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. McLEAN.—It is not right that that should be the case. I say that both sides of the street should pay equal amounts of rates, it does not matter what property they have. I ask, is it right that in one portion of the city a building with about 60ft. frontage pays £60 annually in rates, whereas in the same street, in the same locality, a piece of ground six times as large as the other only pays £10? I do not wish to refer to the names of the persons owning the latter place; but the first place that I refer to is the property of the Opera House Company. I am a shareholder in it, and I know what rates they are paying, and I say that a piece of land adjoining that of the company, and six times as large, does not pay one-sixth of the rates that the Opera House Company pays.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That has nothing to do with this Bill.

Mr. McLEAN.—It has, because under this Bill land would be taxed on the unimproved value, and in that case the company would probably only pay £45—a saving of £15 to the company,—while the owner of the other land

would pay more than he does. I should like to put another case. Is it fair that two houses alongside each other in Willis Street, occupying exactly the same space in the street, should pay the one £11 in rates per annum and the other £8? Here is a difference of £3 in the case of places just next door to each other, and each occupying the same space in the street. These things are not fair. But I should like to say, further, that in some parts of this city—and it applies in other cities as well as this—acres of land are held for speculative purposes. That land should be held for use, and not for abuse; and, if people choose to hold land for the sake of speculation, then I say that they should be made to pay taxes upon it. The reason why I laughed when the honourable member for Kaiapoi got up was this: I knew at the time, and he knew, how anxious the Colonial Treasurer was to bring forward another Bill, and that was what kept me quiet in my seat. I was anxious that he should get it forward, but as certain honourable gentlemen have chosen to waste the time of the House I do not see why I should not occupy a few minutes of time. I will not take up much time now, but may deal with this measure if it comes up again. The honourable member for Clutha was good enough to state in his speech that he had heard me upon some public platform advocate the single tax. I appeal to honourable members whether I have ever delayed this House unnecessarily in connection with the single tax. Last year, when my colleague brought forward the Wellington City Sanitation Bill, I had an opportunity of getting an opinion from this House upon this principle, but I did not delay the House more than seven or eight minutes over that transaction, and I say that was not long to take up in discussing a principle which you thoroughly believe in; but I was perfectly contented to remain quiet till it came back from the Committee to which it was proposed to refer it. I do not approve of this sending important Bills to special Committees, for this reason: that, when Bills are about to be sent to Committees, whoever introduces such Bills says, "Do not discuss them; let us send them to the Committee";—and the Committee may know as little about the matters dealt with in the Bills as the honourable member sending them there. We are not allowed to discuss the Bill, and it is expected to come back from the Committee perfect. When the Bill comes back from the Committee we are urged not to discuss it, but to let it go into Committee of this House; and then when it comes out of Committee it is said, "For Goodness' sake let it pass; don't delay the House." I do object to that sort of business, if we are going to have free speech. I think, except in the case of Native Bills, that measures should not so frequently be sent to Committees and thus discussion be cut short. The honourable member for Clutha stated that he heard me defend the single tax on a platform in this city, and that then I abandoned it in this House, and abandoned everything else except the practice of attacking my colleagues.

Mr. McLean

Sir, I distinctly say that I have never attacked any member of this House. I have, indeed, on one occasion,—or on two occasions,—defended myself from the attacks of other honourable members. And the honourable member for Clutha should remember this: that you, Sir, as Speaker, have never yet had occasion to call me to order or ask me to apologize for my language in this House. The honourable gentleman should bear that in mind. I do object to these personal attacks upon myself when they are quite undeserved. I will not delay the House any longer, but if the Bill comes up again I shall be able to bring forward such amendments as will make the measure more suitable to the City of Wellington. The citizens of Wellington, I think, cannot go wrong if they are simply asked to vote Yea or Nay upon this question.

Mr. WRIGHT.—I shall not keep the House many minutes. The honourable member who last addressed the House disclaimed any responsibility in connection with this Bill, and denied that he is one of the "faddists" who are responsible for it. I may be permitted to point out that we have had shoals of these Bills introduced by this Ministry, and that it is not necessary to go outside the ranks of the Ministry in order to provide "fads" for the House to consider. The honourable member spoke as if this Bill had been brought forward almost entirely for the benefit of the town properties. He spoke of acres of land held for speculative purposes in the City of Wellington. It does not appear to occur to him that the owners of these sections are losing money whilst the land is unoccupied, and at the same time they are paying rates upon the sections, and if they were compelled to put up buildings upon these unimproved sections in advance of any demand for such buildings it must necessarily bring down the rent of all those buildings which now exist. There are many instances to be seen in that position throughout the colony, the most notable, I think, in the City of Dunedin. However, my object in speaking was to refer briefly to the effect of this rate upon unimproved value so far as it will affect country lands. The Bill gives power to any score of rate-payers to put this machinery in motion. Now, this Bill, as far as it deals with country lands, would have the effect of levying heavy additional taxation upon large areas of inferior lands—lands that are not capable of improvement to the extent that is contemplated in this Bill. The rating-power is doubled on the unimproved value by clause 25. Well, on the assumption that the improvements represent half the total value of property, that doubling of the rating-power would be fair enough; but when you have to deal with lands that are not capable of much improvement, and where the improvements amount, it may be, to not more than 10 per cent. of the unimproved value of the land, it must be patent to any one who pays the least attention to the matter that this will almost double the taxation to be levied on the owners of inferior lands, whilst at the same time it would diminish the contributions from

the owners of the more productive lands—the heavier lands—throughout the colony. They would be in the fortunate position of being relieved of their present taxation, whilst theirs are the very properties that bring traffic on the roads, and necessitate the levying of heavy rates; whilst the lighter lands, not capable of much improvement and bringing but little traffic on the roads, would be subject to a large increase in their rates. I wish to be very brief in discussing this question, seeing the lateness of the hour. The Bill is divided into three Parts. Part I. may be necessary owing to the intention of the Government to cease making valuation-rolls for the local bodies. The other two Parts certainly are not necessary at the present time. I should advise the Government to abandon Parts II. and III.; and when they introduce a measure for the rating of Native lands it should be a measure standing alone, so that honourable members may be able to deal with it and vote upon it untrammelled by any other considerations than that of voting for the taxation of Native lands, which is in itself a very wide and difficult subject.

Mr. WARD. — I regret to find that some honourable members evidently have misconstrued the remarks I made in introducing the Bill, when I stated it was proposed to refer part of it to a Select Committee, and a portion of it to the Native Affairs Committee. I am sorry to find that more than one honourable member has twisted my remarks into a desire on my part to stifle the debate, or to limit fair criticism by any member of the House. More than one honourable member has alluded to it, and I think it is only due to myself to say that I made no such statement. I suggested that the Bill, after the second reading, might be referred to a Select Committee, and that the portion of it providing for taxation of Native lands should be referred to the Native Affairs Committee. In doing so, I stated that it was a very important Bill, and that every effort should be made to make it a good one. Now, I think it is somewhat unfair to myself to impute to me the slightest desire to limit the speech of any honourable member. I should be sorry to do that. I am quite as anxious as others to see the business pushed on, but, at the same time, I would not be a party to stop fair criticism of an important Bill such as this. Now, Sir, some of the criticisms of the Bill have been somewhat unfair. I feel bound to say one or two honourable members have departed somewhat—in my opinion, at any rate—from the usual nice feelings that should be shown on either side of the House in the course of a debate. I cannot help expressing the opinion that the honourable member for Clutha—and I listened to him very quietly—bordered very closely to-night on being impertinent. I regret to say it, because I have a high respect for that honourable gentleman. But I do think it is generally recognised that when an honourable member is in private conversation with a gentleman who is a stranger, from my knowledge of what is

etiquette in this House and what has been the custom hitherto, it is looked upon as in exceedingly bad form to in any way allude to a visitor, who has as much right to have his name respected as a stranger would were he in the gallery. I do think it is to be regretted, in his own interest, that the honourable member for Clutha should be developing what I say is a bad trait in his character—that of domineering to the verge of a boor. He would be consulting his own dignity if he did not attempt to indulge in that style of criticism. He is treated with respect by the whole of us, and he should therefore extend the same courtesy in return. The honourable member for the Wairarapa discussed the Bill very fairly. He, however, laboured under a misapprehension upon one or two points. He expressed regret that the burden of assessing the land should be thrown on the local bodies. Now, under the existing law local bodies have the option either to adopt the Government assessment or to make an assessment of their own. Most cities of the colony—at least the principal ones—have elected to make their own assessment instead of adopting that of the Government. If the statement made by the honourable gentleman, and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), is correct, that this Bill is going to throw an increased burden on those local bodies, then how is it that some of those local bodies have elected in the past to make their own assessments instead of accepting that of the Government? I do not think myself that there is very much in that, and a great deal more was made of it in the course of the debate than there appeared to me to be any necessity for. Then, again, the honourable member supposed that the Tax Department would continue to make triennial assessments, and that that would clash with the local bodies' assessments. The honourable member is entirely wrong. The department has no such intention. I propose to introduce next session legislation upon this very important question, and the system of triennial assessment by the department will not be continued. So there is nothing whatever in the assertion about clashing with local bodies. I could not understand an honourable member when he said that another objection to the measure was that the County Councils might possibly be accused of partiality, and of making the appointment of valuers so that they might get their properties valued at low rates. I do not understand what he meant by it. It appeared to be a reflection upon the members of local bodies who made the valuations for the district in which they are concerned. Now, Sir, the honourable member for Mataura was good enough to say that any one could read the clauses of a Bill in introducing it. Well, I think that remark was scarcely fair. I have seen the honourable member himself attempting to reply in the House, and the honourable member, as a matter of fact, failed absolutely to do so. I do not think I have in any way departed from the usual course

in introducing this Bill. I have heard many honourable members on more than one occasion declare that the clauses of a Bill were never explained; and, when clauses are explained, members on the other side, who are very fastidious, have demanded fuller explanations. The honourable member for Mataura stated that I had in my head the District of Southland entirely in the framing of this Bill. Now, Sir, I have not considered Southland in the matter at all. Some honourable members have assumed that this Bill is introduced at the request of "faddists" supporting the Government. As a matter of fact, strong representations have been made to the Government, from the North Island particularly, that this Bill should be introduced. There have been strong representations from the North upon the question of rating Native land; there have been strong representations generally in connection with the Rating Acts from the North Island; and it seems to me that the honourable member for Mataura, in his desire to attempt to limit my knowledge to one district only, forgets there are other parts of the colony which have a greater interest, so far as the amendment of the Rating Act is concerned, than the district to which he and I belong. As to that district, there is no doubt whatever it would be quite content with the existing system; but, as a matter of fact, the Government have had the very strongest representations made to them by local bodies in other districts upon this question of rating. The honourable member for Mataura, if his knowledge does not extend beyond Southland, must not suppose that the knowledge possessed by every one else is equally limited, and Southland will not object to other districts obtaining what they find necessary. I am bound to say the honourable member for Waipa does the Government an injustice when he states, as he did, that the intention doubtless was to simply get this Bill before the House, and then hold it over merely as an electioneering dodge. I think the honourable member is evidently not quite so well informed as to what is going on in the North Island as I supposed he was.

Mr. LAKE.—In Auckland.

Mr. WARD.—No, in the North Island. Strong representations have come to the Government on the subject, and the Government have no intention to in any way humbug the country, or to introduce this Bill merely for the sake of having it hung up. The object of the Government is to refer this Bill to a Select Committee, and that portion of it referring to the Natives to the Native Affairs Committee, for the purpose of putting a good Bill on the statute-book this session. Then the honourable member for Wairarapa and the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) raised the question of poor properties. The honourable member for Wairarapa said the owners of poor properties that could not be highly improved would be treated in what was really a monstrous and outrageous manner by having to pay far more than their proper share of taxation. Now, what has been the position

of men with no very large amount of property, but property that has been largely improved, in some districts of the North Island? What has been the position, I ask, under the existing system? It has been found to be this: that in some cases a certain small property has been considerably improved, while the owner of the property that immediately adjoins it has not carried out any improvements at all, and the owner of this largely-improved property is subjected to a much greater proportion of taxation for local purposes than his neighbour with unimproved property adjoining him. As a matter of fact, representations have been made from some of the districts where this system has existed, pointing out the necessity for some change in the direction we are now taking, so that the local bodies may exercise the power given under this Bill to rate on the unimproved value, and to make rating on this basis compulsory, in consequence of the way in which some of these unfortunate people find themselves unfairly handicapped by reason of the excessive proportion of the taxation placed upon their properties, owing to their being improved, as against those which remain unimproved. Take the case of such properties as those to which the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) alluded. He referred to his own warehouse, upon which he stated he had spent a large sum of money, and he thought he was fairly made to pay extra taxation in respect of it because of the use he made of the streets with his horses and drays. He held that a man who did not build upon his section should not be subject to so heavy taxation for local purposes. Why, does not the honourable gentleman know that in some of the towns in New Zealand there is land which is greatly needed for building purposes, and yet is kept totally unimproved, reaping nevertheless the increased value that is given to it by reason of the improvements made in the properties close to it? In such cases people will not continue to stand the owners of these lands paying a much lower rate of taxation when they will not allow the lands to be used at all. Who is it that makes the value of the land? Why, Sir, it is the enterprising man who is expending his energy and capital, and putting his shoulder to the wheel. It is he who gives the value to the adjoining unimproved property. That has been the case in many of the towns in New Zealand, and I am surprised to see an honourable gentleman representing a city constituency so averse from making the owner of property either improve it or dispose of it. Now, some diversity of opinion exists as to whether this 10 per cent. interest on unpaid rates should be per annum, or, as it is now for land- and income-tax purposes, leviable in one sum. I am bound to confess this is a debatable point. It is a point which I think the Committee should carefully study; and I may say that I am not prepared to contend that it would be wrong to make it payable as a penalty, and not per annum. At any rate, the Government are quite prepared to consider it. The honourable member for Ellesmere dis-

Mr. Ward

cussed this measure with the utmost fairness; and it is, to my mind at any rate, something to find that the honourable gentleman regarded the introduction of this Bill as necessary, inasmuch as in the Financial Statement there was a clear indication given that, owing to the proposed changes in taxation, there must necessarily be a change in the system of rating made by the Government. The honourable member for Ellesmere, I say, with his usual frankness, at once acknowledged that the Bill was necessary on this ground. One honourable gentleman on that side of the House, the honourable member for Kaiapoi, seemed to be wonderfully obtuse on that point, for he failed to see the necessity for the introduction of the Bill; and he asked why it was necessary that it should be introduced. I may tell him that it is introduced for three primary reasons, which are indicated in the measure. One is that a large section of the people in the North Island have been urging that, owing to the position in which they were placed for rating purposes, they should have the right to exercise the privilege of rating properties on their unimproved values. There are a large number of people in the North Island who have been urging the Government that the Natives should be forced to contribute a fair amount of the taxation of the country; and, in addition to that, honourable members must know it was necessary to introduce a system by which to change the rating in order to comply with the land- and income-tax proposals of the Government. Yet the honourable member for Kaiapoi said there was no necessity for the introduction of such a Bill.

Mr. MOORE.—I said a portion of it should be passed. I do not condemn it as a whole.

Mr. WARD.—The honourable member said very clearly that there were no reasons whatever for the introduction of this Bill; and yet, in introducing it, the first thing I said was that this measure was introduced for the purpose of dealing with these three points which I have just mentioned. The honourable member, I think, was followed by one or two other members on that side of the House in saying that I did not indicate the principles of the Bill. In saying that, they said what is contrary to the fact, because, as a matter of fact, I had done so. I wish now to refer to the speech of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District. The honourable gentleman said that he was not at all happy so far as this Bill was concerned. He was not prepared to accept the Bill, or even to suggest any amendment in it. He was opposed to it absolutely, and preferred to see the whole Bill thrown out. In fact, the whole of the Native members are rather averse from this proposal to tax Native lands. Of course I am aware of this. Now, during the recess I visited a large Native meeting at Waipatu. There I met a number of the Natives, and at the meeting, as some of the Native members will, perhaps, remember, I indicated my opinion that it was necessary, in the interests of the Natives themselves, that they should contribute to the general

taxation of the country. I then gave, as I say, a clear and unmistakable indication to that effect. If these honourable members will carefully consider the matter they will see that it is to the interests of the Natives that they should commence to contribute to the taxation of the country. The honourable member for the Western Maori District raised a question as to whether it was fair or not fair to tax Native lands the same as European lands are taxed, seeing that Natives cannot deal with their lands as Europeans can do with theirs. Now, that would be a debatable question. In reply, I have to say that, in my opinion, it is fair to tax them; but it is a question whether they should not be taxed proportionately less than Europeans are taxed for rating purposes. That, I say, is a debatable question. It is a question the Native and European members must consider when the Bill is before the Committee, and I have no doubt it will be carefully considered there. The Native members are mistaken in their hostility to the proposal, for public opinion from one end of this country to the other clearly runs in the direction that some change in this system should be made; and I would point out to those members that it is not a party question, and, no matter what Government may occupy these benches, this question cannot be long deferred, because, as I say, public opinion will force any Government which may be in power to tackle this question of the taxation of Native lands. There can be no doubt about that, and those Native members should realise that this is the case. The honourable member for the Southern Maori District touched upon another point that calls for notice. He asked how it was that Stewart Island was not included. To that I am bound to say that if Stewart Island is not included it should be included, just the same as any other part of the colony. If it is not in the Bill now, it will have to be put in; and when the Bill is before the Select Committee I trust that if the honourable member is there he will see that that particular portion of the colony is put in precisely the same position as other portions. I have no doubt that the Natives there are quite prepared to share with the Natives of the North Island their fair proportion of the taxation of the country. The only thing I regretted to hear in the speeches made by the Native members was the statement of the honourable member for the Northern Maori District, that he would have preferred to have been born a Chinaman, rather than a Maori. To my mind, the honourable gentleman is doing an injustice to himself and to the Natives at large in making such a comparison as that. In fact, I think the honourable gentleman must have made it by way of a joke, for when he comes seriously to reflect on the matter he will agree with me that the Maori race is in many respects superior to the Chinese. Now, I have a word to say in connection with some of the points raised by the honourable member for the Hutt. If such cases have occurred in any part of the country as he re-

ferred to, where the cost of collecting the tax would be greater than the tax when collected, then I should say that the right thing for the local body to do would be not to collect the tax at all. If it is going to cost in collection as much as the tax would produce, I should say that the local body might as well do without it. If it were left to me, I would say that I would not collect it. Then the honourable gentleman went on to say that the system which was suited to us was one that existed in Italy, of the central Government sending out taxing-forms for general and local taxing purposes, and then, upon collection, handing over the amount of the local rates to the local bodies. The same system exists, I may say, in some of the American States, and a great deal is to be said for it. But, so far as I have ascertained, or been able to observe, it is not one that would suit the circumstances of this colony. At any rate, it is a matter for the local bodies themselves to consider, and, if necessary, to make the initiatory movement upon. If they had thought it desirable to follow the example of the American States in this respect, I am disposed to think that some proposal for its adoption would have been made before now. I think the matter is one, however, that might well be considered by the Select Committee. It is a matter that requires consideration. Then the honourable gentleman went on to suggest that there should be an exemption of taxation in respect of sand-dunes, as it costs a great deal to reclaim them, and that, in fact, the people who take up this kind of land should be allowed to occupy it rent-free for a certain time. Now, as regards some of the sandhills in the North Island, I understand they are let at nominal rents, and I do not think, under the circumstances, one could expect them to be free of all taxation. Still, it is a fitting matter for the Committee to consider. The honourable member was good enough to say that he thought a mistake had been made in this Bill in adhering to the bare majority, instead of providing for a three-fifths majority as proposed in another Bill. Now, Sir, it is quite to be expected that such a point as that might be raised by an opponent of the Government. At the same time, one can hardly think the honourable gentleman was serious in raising it, or that he was desirous of placing the matter referred to in this Bill in the same category as the matter referred to in the other Bill to which I have alluded. The two positions are as different as daylight from dark, and if the system he asks us to apply under this Rating Bill were applied the honourable gentleman knows perfectly well that it would not work at all. It is directly contrary to the purposes of the Bill in every possible way. So, while the honourable gentleman endeavoured to score in that respect, the circumstances of the two cases are quite different, and do not admit of comparison. I just wish to say a word or two with reference to several points raised by the honourable member for Waikato which deserve consideration. The question was raised by

several other honourable members as well as by him, and notably by the honourable member for Marsden, as to whether this Bill was going to achieve anything really practical in regard to the rating of Native lands—if it was likely to meet the purposes for which it was intended. Now, that is a matter which requires, no doubt, to be carefully considered. The object of the Bill is to enable those purposes to be achieved that I have indicated as those for which the Bill was introduced. The desire of the Government is to have the Native lands of the colony made to contribute their fair share of taxation; and if any portion of the Bill is defective, and fails to accomplish what is intended, then, undoubtedly, that should be remedied. I do not think it as unworkable as the honourable gentleman stated. However, I think it is a matter which should be very carefully considered by the Committee, and, if desirable, an improvement could be made. I do not think the honourable member for Waipa was justified in the remarks he made about *fagot-voting*. The honourable gentleman is not aware that in some districts in the North, owing to the number of absent voters, the resident rate-payers are frequently defeated in their attempts to obtain a vote for some local purpose. I think, myself, as the honourable member is so anxious to make it appear that *fagot-voting* is going to exist under our proposals, he can scarcely be so familiar as the Government with what has transpired in some districts in the North. He can scarcely be so, for, if he were, no doubt he would change his opinion on the matter, and admit that the proposal in the Bill is necessary. I just wish to touch on one other point that was referred to by the honourable member for Palmerston. He gave us the aggregate amount that would be collected both in town and country under the rating proposed in the Bill, and compared it with that under the existing Rating Act. I have not been able to check the honourable gentleman's figures, but they are no doubt correct; but I would point out to him, when he indicated that the rate of 8d. would bring in some £700,000, or £200,000 more than was wanted, that, clearly, if that is the case, a local body would not rate up to 8d., but probably 2d. or 2½d. as the case might be. It is not compulsory under the Bill to make a local body tax up to 8d.; they have the right to impose a tax below 8d.; so that if too much would be obtained by a tax of 8d., the local body, after giving full and careful thought to their requirements, would levy a rate to the amount they thought necessary, and not in excess of their requirements. I think I have now met most of the arguments of honourable members who have discussed this Bill. I have only to say that I thoroughly agree with the honourable member for Waitemata when he says that the object of honourable members, so far as legislation is concerned, should be to push on. I think all are agreed on that point, and I hope, now that we have, at any rate, made up our minds to go to work seriously, from now to the end of the session our general motto will be, "Push on."

Mr. Ward

The House divided on the question, "That the Bill be read a second time."

AYES, 30.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Sandford
Buick	Lawry	Seddon
Cadman	Mackintosh	Shera
Carroll	McGowan	Smith, E. M.
Duncan	McLean	Thompson, R.
Fish	Meredith	Thompson, T.
Guinness	Mills, C. H.	Ward.
Harkness	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Palmer	Hogg
Joyce	Pinkerton	Smith, W. C.
Kelly, J.		

NOES, 9.

Buckland	Rolleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hutchison, G.	Taipua	Allen
Kapa	Wright.	Parata.
Lake		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Carncross	Hall
Earnshaw	Valentine
Fraser	Mitchelson
Hall-Jones	Swan
Hutchison, W.	Bruce
McGuire	Fergus
McKenzie, J.	Russell
Reeves	Maackenzie, T.
Tanner	Buchanan
Taylor	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Willis.	Richardson.

Majority for, 21.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at forty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1898.

Second Reading—Third Readings—Oamaru Loans Consolidation Bill—Inspection of Machinery Act—Otago and Southland Education Reserves—Government Bills—Education Endowments—Electoral Bill—Adjournment.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READING.

Kaipoi Borough Council Vesting Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Gore Electric Lighting Bill, Gisborne High School Bill, Mokoreta Cemetery Reserve Bill, Kīwitea County Bill, Wellington (City) Suburbs Sanitation Bill.

OAMARU LOANS CONSOLIDATION BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

The Hon. Mr. ORMOND said that when he moved the adjournment of the debate he did so for the purpose of seeing whether it was possible to frame any provisions that would

provide that the dissentients to the Bill should have an opportunity of assenting to it before it became law. He had ascertained from the gentleman in charge of the Bill, and the promoters of it, that they were not content to accept any such proposal, and if such a proposal were accepted the Bill would only be necessary so far as the provisions in it which affected the rating-power, and so on. If the promoters had been willing to accept this proposal it would not have been necessary for the Bill to come into operation until the whole of the bondholders were consenting parties. Then all opposition would have been withdrawn from the Bill. But he did not see his way to frame any provision to meet the case with a view of postponing the operation of the Bill until assent was given. That, he understood, would not be satisfactory. He still considered that the Bill was a departure of a most dangerous kind, and if the principle were affirmed it would open the way in the future to other and larger proposals of the same kind. He ventured to say that it would have the effect of largely depreciating the value of all such securities in the English market, where the colony had been in the habit of getting its money for local purposes. He had not made any other motion in the way of making the Bill of service, but he would propose that it be read a third time that day six months, for the purpose of putting on record his dissent, and the dissent of the other members of the Council who agreed with him that it was a wrong departure. He moved, *That the Bill be read the third time that day six months.*

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said he perfectly agreed that the principle involved in the Bill was one of very great importance indeed. The Committee to whom the Bill was referred went into the matter in a fair and critical spirit, and with every desire to elicit any point which could be raised against the Bill. The promoters of the measure had been represented before the Committee by counsel, and the Oamaru Borough was also represented by counsel. They were at one as to the desirability of the Bill passing, but the point which the Committee endeavoured to find out was as to the opposition of those bondholders who did not assent to the provisions of the Bill. The test they endeavoured to apply was this: If a Receiver were appointed now, it would be disastrous to the bondholders, and it was quite apparent that the rating in Oamaru had now reached a point when to increase it would really diminish the revenue derived from rating. That would arise simply because property would be depreciated much in value, and he doubted very much whether the bondholders would get anything like 5 per cent. Something had been said with regard to dissenting bondholders. The position of those was, that they really had no information as to the position of matters at all. Those bondholders were in London, and the Committee felt that they had taken up a quiescent attitude, or that they had not shown any opposition to the measure. If the amendment were agreed

to, it meant that a Receiver might be appointed, and the bondholders would be left to themselves. He had no hesitation in saying that their position would be very much worse than it would be under the proposed arrangement. He held very strongly that the Bill was one really inimical to the interests of the Corporation. Looking at it from a purely financial point of view, he felt satisfied—at all events, he would not say that he felt satisfied, but he was very apprehensive—that the Corporation would not be able to carry out the arrangement to pay the proposed 5 per cent. interest. He did not think the Corporation could pay so large an amount of interest, and it was very unfortunate that the circumstances were such. The Committee had pointed that out to the counsel engaged in the case. The Town Clerk of Oamaru thought that if the interest were reduced to 5 per cent. the Corporation would be able to meet the amount required. He would only point out, what was stated by the Hon. Mr. Bonar, that the non-assenting shareholders formed about one-tenth of the whole. A large number of the bondholders were actively supporting the Bill, a percentage were practically quiescent, and a certain number only were non-dissenting in the sense that they were not prepared to take any active steps against it. If such an arrangement should be given effect to, undoubtedly that was the Bill that should be sanctioned, and he thought this was a consideration that should weigh with the Council in dealing with a Bill of this kind. He had gone into the matter very carefully, and he felt satisfied that if the Bill were not assented to disaster would take place in Oamaru, and very great injury would be done to the bondholders. They would suffer very seriously, while under the Bill they would receive 5 per cent., and the term of the debentures would be extended. Although he had agreed to it very reluctantly, he had no hesitation in saying that the Bill was in the interests of all parties, and the arrangement was an equitable one, which should be given effect to, not only in the interests of the Borough of Oamaru, but in the interests of the bondholders themselves.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN asked whether the Committee on the Bill took into consideration the question of the rating-power of the borough. He would like to ask what was the position. Was it in the power of the liquidator to increase the rates?

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART stated that it had been urged by the counsel representing the bondholders that they had the right to rate beyond the special rates sanctioned by the special Acts under which the loans had been raised. They urged that under the Municipal Corporations Act of 1886. Mr. Bell also urged that the bondholders had a legal right to rate beyond the specific rates sanctioned in the Acts under which the loans were raised—that was to say, that the Council had power to increase the rates. It seemed to him a very startling provision, and, on looking at the matter, there seemed to be considerable colour for that view

being sanctioned by law. The bondholders could practically rate an amount up to £1 on the value of the rateable property. One effect which he hoped honourable members would not overlook was, that the annual rental-value of Oamaru had diminished during the last ten years from about £54,000 to £33,000. Looking at that fact, he had no hesitation in saying that the bondholders and the Corporation would suffer very seriously if the Bill were not given effect to. He had come to that conclusion very reluctantly, because his sympathies were with those bondholders who had not assented. He felt satisfied their rights under the Bill would not be prejudiced. The arrangement ought not to have been entered into by the borough in the position in which it was.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN thought there was considerable difficulty in settling how to vote on this question. As he had already stated, the Bill before the Council was a private Bill. It was quite true that difficulties had arisen between the bondholders and the Corporation. His honourable friend had not given him the information that he required. He wanted to know the opinion of the honourable gentleman, after hearing the argument of Mr. Bell, whether there was power to raise a higher rate than the limit under the Municipal Act. The borough was entitled to raise a certain amount, and to rate up to a certain amount. As far as the depreciation in the value of property was concerned, that was nothing new; and Oamaru was no exception. The whole colony had suffered as regarded depreciation in values, and the thing that prevented Oamaru from going ahead was the very high municipal rates imposed. People preferred to go outside the boundary of the town, on account of the high rates. It was a matter which he really did think should be postponed a little further, in order to see whether anything could be done. He did not like to oppose the Bill, but he saw the difficulties that might arise through passing it—making this a precedent. However, one did not like to take the responsibility of throwing the measure out.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS thought the motion of the Hon. Mr. Ormond would give those who held that the Bill contained an important departure an opportunity of recording their votes against the principle proposed to be established—that it was the duty of the Legislature to interfere between local bodies and their creditors. At all events, the Council would not be without warning as to the position. Those, of course, who took a different view would probably be firm in their opinion, and no doubt they would take the responsibility of what appeared to him to be the inevitable result—of what must come. His honourable friend Mr. Stewart had stated that he was fairly well convinced that the borough would not be able to carry out the arrangement, even if made. The question was, What was to be the attitude of the Legislature upon such questions?

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI said his honour-

Hon. W. Downie Stewart

able friend was wrong. What he objected to in this measure was the proposal to give the bondholders power to rate up to 20s. in the pound. There could be no doubt that it gave too much power to the bondholders. They already had their pound of flesh, but now they wanted the whole body. That was the only reason why he objected to the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN said it was generally understood that people who lent their money on a very high rate of interest must accept security accordingly, and, if it turned out that the security was acknowledged to be bad, it appeared to him that those persons who had lent their money must take their chance. He did not see why they should be treated differently, and that this Bill should be passed merely to secure persons who had lent their money on such doubtful security from possible loss that might take place. On these grounds, he would vote for the amendment of the Hon. Mr. Ormond.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK said that what he objected to in the matter was, that they were taking a new departure, and were interfering between bondholders and local bodies. He thought if all the bondholders had come into the arrangement it would have been beneficial to both parties, but under this Bill there was a sort of coercion proposed. He thought it was a very important matter for the Council to consider—whether they should establish a precedent of the kind; and it also appeared to him that the Colony of New Zealand might be made responsible for local bodies if they interfered between the local bodies and their creditors. He was not certain whether under this Bill the creditors could not come upon the colony to pay the deficiency.

The Hon. Mr. MACGREGOR, in reply, would state that the Bill might be looked at from three points of view. First of all there was the Corporation of the Borough of Oamaru, then the bondholders of that Corporation, and thirdly the colony as a whole. The Bill had been very carefully and fairly looked into from every point of view, and he thought that, after all that had been said, it was clear that in the interests of all parties this Bill should become law. The only questionable point was as regarded the borough itself. It appeared from the statement made by the Hon. Mr. Stewart, Chairman of the Committee, that the only question was as to whether the borough might not have made a much better bargain. With regard to the bondholders, there was not the slightest doubt that this arrangement was entirely in their interests. The evidence taken before the Committee, which had been referred to by the Chairman of the Committee, put it beyond all doubt that this arrangement was the very best possible one that could be made in the interest of the bondholders. On the previous day a telegram was received by the Premier from, he understood, the chairman of the Committee of Bondholders in London, in which he said that he had had an interview with a deputation of the bondholders,

and that his opinion was that the rejection of the Bill would be injurious to the interests of the colony, and disastrous to the bondholders, and that a Receiver would follow; also, that the percentage of consents was abnormally high as compared with similar cases. Now, he thought that telegram fully bore out what had already been said in the Council; and, considering the large number of bondholders who had assented to the Bill, he thought it was almost impossible to conceive a case in which so near an approach to unanimity could be obtained. With regard to the comparatively small number who, it appeared from the evidence before the Committee,—and he might mention that he did not know until the evidence was adduced that there were any at all,—intimated some months ago that they did not consent, he submitted to the Council that the proper way to look upon it was that, inasmuch as those bondholders had not chosen to make any representation at all to the Council, while they were well aware that application was intended to be made to the Legislature for an Act to authorise the Corporation to carry out this arrangement, the Council might very well infer that the position these bondholders took up was simply one of quiescence. He submitted it was also perfectly clear that it was in the interests of the colony as a whole that this arrangement should be carried out, because, as had been intimated in the cable message he had read, the result of the Bill not being passed would be that a Receiver would be immediately appointed. He thought that all who were concerned—as all in the colony were concerned—must see that it was infinitely better that an arrangement which had been shown by ample evidence to be in the interests of the bondholders should be carried out rather than that they should be left to do their best by appointing a Receiver. In reference to what had fallen from the Hon. Mr. McLean, he might point out that this Legislature had interfered in the interest of bondholders of local bodies, inasmuch as, by a provision in the Act of 1886, additional securities—which they had no right to expect at the time they lent money—had been given to them, because there could be no doubt, on reading the section of the Act referred to by the Hon. Mr. McLean, that by that Act the Corporation had received power to levy rates up to any amount that might be necessary to meet the interest on its loans. Then, there was another provision, giving the same power to the Receiver in the event of its being necessary to appoint a Receiver. Those provisions were not in existence at the time the bondholders lent the money. Now the interference of the Legislature was asked, and it was perfectly clear that this interference was more in the interests of these bondholders, inasmuch as debentures which were at present unsaleable would, immediately on the passing of this Bill, become saleable, as the evidence showed.

The Council divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 26.

Acland	Holmes	Richardson
Baillie	Jenkinson	Rigg
Barnicoat	Jennings	Stewart
Bolt	Kelly	Swanson
Bonar	Kerr	Wahawaha
Buckley	MacGregor	Walker, L.
Dignan	McCullough	Walker, W. C.
Feldwick	Montgomery	Whyte.
Hart	Reynolds	

NOES, 9.

Bowen	McLean	Pharazyn
Johnston	Ormond	Stevens
Mantell	Peacock	Williams.

Majority for, 17.

Bill read the third time.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY ACT.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON asked the Hon. the Attorney-General, If the provisions of the Inspection of Machinery Act extend to the railway workshops and Government Printing Office; and, if not, why not? His reason for asking the question was that there were a number of accidents arising from the want of proper safeguards in connection with machinery used in the railway workshops. He could not see why the Act should not extend to the workmen inside the workshops as well as to those outside, who were protected. He would also like to draw attention to the very lax supervision exercised by Inspectors in cases where the Act did apply. He had been himself appealed to several times to draw attention to the danger from machinery used in different works being wholly uncovered, being, in some cases, perfect man-traps; and he thought the Inspectors should exercise a little more supervision, especially in regard to machinery used in flax-mills. He would not like to do anything that might retard the flax industry, but he did not think that industry should be fostered at the expense of the lives and limbs of the workmen, and he trusted better supervision would be exercised.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY replied that if his honourable friend referred to section 61 of "The Inspection of Machinery Act, 1882," he would there see the reason why the operation of the Act did not apply to inspection of that character. He might inform him that, with the exception of the Railway Department's works, all such works were inspected regularly by Inspectors of Machinery. The railway workshops, he believed, were not so inspected, for the reason that the Act exempted them, while the department had several experts of its own.

OTAGO AND SOUTHLAND EDUCATION RESERVES.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS—in moving, *That copies of all letters, reports, and papers relative to the inquiry by Mr. J. E. March into the administration of education and endowment reserves in Otago and Southland be laid on the table, together with instructions given to Mr. March*—said that the motion had reference

to certain reserves for educational purposes in the Province of Otago and Southland. He might say that the Minister of Lands, in sending Mr. March to inquire into the administration of these reserves, was exceeding his powers. He had no power, according to law, to appoint Mr. March to make any such inquiry; but the Boards whose administration would be affected by the inquiry were only too glad to offer not only Mr. March and the Government the very fullest information, but also the public; and accordingly they had placed at the disposal of Mr. March their office, their officers, and also all their books and papers—everything, in fact, to assist his inquiry. Now, these Boards were anxious to know the contents of the report of Mr. March upon their administration, and it was with a view of getting such papers that he had moved his motion.

Motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BILLS.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS moved, *That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report as to the best means of circulating throughout the colony the provisions contained in Government Bills to be introduced in Parliament during future sessions, so that districts outside of Wellington may be able to ascertain their purport, and to express an opinion upon such Bills before they become law; also, what course should be adopted to secure publicity being given to Bills purposed to be introduced by private members during future sessions: the Committee to consist of the Hon. Mr. Bolt, the Hon. Mr. Bowen, the Hon. Mr. Jenkinson, the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, the Hon. Mr. McCullough, the Hon. Mr. Stewart, and the mover.* He would say that since he gave notice of that motion he had heard it stated by some honourable members that the result would not be satisfactory if the motion were carried. Well, he did not think, at any rate, it could do any harm. His own conviction was that the proposal would be most satisfactory in the interests of the colony, and also of the Government. He might be wrong in this, but all he asked was that a Committee might be appointed for the purpose of inquiring into and ascertaining whether there was any feasible course by which fuller information could be given to the public as to the legislation that was to take place. At the present time there were in parts of the colony people who knew nothing at all about measures that were being passed, until they became law. Sooner or later the colony would rebel against such a state of things, and it would be better, he thought, to anticipate objection and make provision accordingly at the present time. The second part of his resolution referred to the introduction of Bills by private members. He thought it was a most objectionable thing that they should be introduced without due publicity being given. He believed there was a very simple remedy, and his suggestion was that, if they wanted to alter any colonial Act, honourable members should forward copies of their

Bills to the Government at least a fortnight or three weeks before the meeting of Parliament, so as to allow their measures to be examined by some one in the Government departments. There was nothing novel in this proposition, because at one time they had a Parliament in Dunedin which, he considered, was far in advance of the Parliament of the colony, and the Provincial Government managed to circulate their Bills a month before the session commenced; and most important Bills some of them were—such Bills as the Fencing Bill, the Ferries Bill, the Education Bill—upon which the present Education Act of the colony was founded—and Bills dealing with roads and debentures. They were the first people in the colony who borrowed money by means of debentures. He had the honour of raising the first money advanced to the colony in Britain, many years ago. Then there were the Provincial Council ordinances which defined districts, and allocated members, and provided for electoral rolls. These were very important Bills. The session to which he alluded commenced on the 5th of the month and ended on the 17th—just twelve days, including Sunday; and honourable members, who had had time to study the Bills, came prepared to deal with them at once; and they did deal with them and got through the session in a very short time. A resolution had been passed by the Council thoroughly indorsing the principle that important measures should be circulated before the sitting of the Provincial Parliament. He did not think that could be done in every case, but there were many Bills, such as the Licensing Bill and the Electoral Bill, upon which the people should have an opportunity of judging before members assembled in Parliament, so that they might be quite prepared to deal with them. He trusted the Council would pass the resolution, if only to see whether it would do any good.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI did not think the Council was justified in incurring the very great expense that the printing and circulating of these measures would entail, and his honourable friend had said that nine-tenths of the Bills might be introduced before the House met. He would say that nine-tenths of the Bills were introduced during the time Parliament was sitting, and were matured during the time Parliament was sitting. He was surprised that his honourable friend, who was one of the advocates of retrenchment, should wish to incur such liabilities as these.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the honourable gentleman was mistaken. He had never said nine-tenths.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI would himself say that nine-tenths of the Bills were introduced while the House was sitting. As for private Bills brought in by honourable members, and which his honourable friend had said the Government should be made aware of before they were introduced, they were already made aware of them through the Private Bills Office a month or six weeks before they were

introduced. Very often they were prepared before the House met.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS said the Hon. Mr. Shrimski was entirely misrepresenting what he said. He had never said anything about private Bills, but referred to private members' Bills; nor had he said anything about circulating nine-tenths of the Bills. He said the important policy Bills or administration Bills might be circulated before the House met; and if any honourable members would not take the trouble to read these Bills, if circulated a month before Parliament met, then they had no business to occupy a seat in Parliament. If Bills were circulated there would be no necessity for the long delay in the business of Parliament. They could have studied them previously, and would come prepared to vote upon them during the session.

The Council divided.

AYES, 22.

Acland	Mantell	Reynolds
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Rigg
Bolt	McCullough	Stewart
Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Buckley	Montgomery	Wahawaha
Dignan	Oliver	Walker, L.
Holmes	Peacock	Whyte.
Jenkinson		

NOES, 9.

Feldwick	Jennings	Pharazyn
Grace	Johnston	Shrimski
Hart	Ormond	Williams.

Majority for, 13.

Motion agreed to.

EDUCATION ENDOWMENTS.

On the motion of the Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY, it was ordered, That the lands described in Paper No. 56, laid upon the table on the 30th June, be permanently set aside as endowments for education.

ELECTORAL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 3.—Interpretation.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY moved, That the words "or leasehold," in the 54th line of page 3, be struck out.

On the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause," the Council divided.

AYES, 27.

Acland	Kerr	Rigg
Bonar	Mantell	Shrimski
Bowen	McLean	Stevens
Feldwick	Oliver	Swanson
Grace	Ormond	Wahawaha
Hart	Peacock	Walker, L.
Holmes	Pollen	Walker, W. C.
Johnston	Reynolds	Whitmore
Kelly	Richardson	Williams.

NOES, 12.

Barnicoat	Jenkinson	Montgomery
Bolt	Jennings	Pharazyn
Buckley	MacGregor	Stewart
Dignan	McCullough	Whyte.

Majority for, 15.

Words retained.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved, That the word "includes," in the 56th line, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 20.

Acland	Jenkinson	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	Jennings	Pollen
Bolt	Johnston	Reynolds
Buckley	McCullough	Stewart
Dignan	Montgomery	Whyte
Hart	Oliver	Williams.
Holmes	Ormond	

NOES, 18.

Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Bowen	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Peacock	Wahawaha
Grace	Richardson	Walker, L.
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Shrimski	Whitmore.

PAIRS.

For.	Against.
Kenny	Morris
MacGregor.	Scotland.

Majority for, 2.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK moved, That the following additional words be added to "person includes": "women who are freeholders or leaseholders, and of the age of twenty-one years."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 14.

Bonar	McLean	Wahawaha
Bowen	Peacock	Walker, L.
Feldwick	Richardson	Walker, W. C.
Grace	Shrimski	Whitmore.
Kelly	Swanson	

NOES, 24.

Acland	Jennings	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	Johnston	Pollen
Bolt	Kerr	Reynolds
Buckley	MacGregor	Rigg
Dignan	McCullough	Stevens
Hart	Montgomery	Stewart
Holmes	Oliver	White
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

Majority against, 10.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, After the definition of "seaman," to insert the words, "'Shearer' means and includes every person who, during the season of the year for shearing sheep in any locality, is *bonâ fide* employed by any owner of sheep in any such locality."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the definition of 'shearer' be inserted after the definition of 'seaman.'"

AYES, 14.

Bowen	Kerr	Wahawaha
Feldwick	McLean	Walker, L.
Grace	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Holmes	Shrimski	Whitmore.
Jenkinson	Swanson	

NOES, 23.

Acland	Kelly	Pollen
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Reynolds
Bolt	McCullough	Richardson
Buckley	Montgomery	Stevens
Dignan	Oliver	Stewart
Hart	Ormond	Whyte
Jennings	Peacock	Williams.
Johnston	Pharazyn	

Majority against, 9.

Motion negatived.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the following new subsection be inserted in clause 6, after subsection (1):—

"Every person of the age of twenty-one years or upwards, having of his own right, and not as a trustee, a leasehold estate in possession, situated within any electoral district, of the annual value of three pounds, whether subjected to incumbrances or not, and of or to which he has been seised or entitled, either at law or in equity, for at least six months next before the registration of his vote, and is not registered in respect of a freehold, leasehold, or residential qualification in the same or any other district, is entitled, subject to the provision of this Act, to be registered as an elector, and to vote at an election of members for such district for the House of Representatives; or".

The Committee divided on the question, "That the proposed subsection be inserted in the clause."

AYES, 14.

Bowen	Kerr	Wahawaha
Feldwick	McLean	Walker, L.
Grace	Richardson	Walker, W. C.
Hart	Shrimski	Whitmore.
Kelly	Swanson	

NOES, 17.

Acland	Jennings	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	Johnston	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Williams.
Jenkinson	Ormond	

Majority against, 3.

Motion negatived.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Council adjourned at half-past nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1899.

First Readings—J. Landon—Moanataiari Tunnel—Fire brigades—J. A. Lloyd—Baby-farming—North Island Roads—Otahuhu Courthouse—Government Residences—Bluff Native Hostelry—Waikato Natives—Lighting Government Buildings—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Pharmacy Bill, Gisborne High School Bill, Mokoreta Cemetery Reserve Bill.

J. LUNDON.

Mr. LAWBY presented a petition from John Landon, re the purchase of the Kaitaia Block.

Mr. MITCHELSON understood that the petition contained gross reflections upon himself, and he would therefore ask that it be read.

The CLERK read the petition, as follows:—

"1. That, when in Wellington nearly two years ago, the petitioner, as agent for the Native owners of various blocks of land north of Auckland, interviewed the Native Minister (Hon. A. J. Cadman), and suggested to him the advisability of the purchase by the Native Minister, on behalf of the Government, of certain blocks adjacent to village settlements in the district north of Auckland.

"2. That, as an outcome of that interview, the Native Minister selected three blocks, which he was prepared so to purchase, out of the number submitted to him by the petitioner.

"3. That the prices to be paid therefor were settled by the Native Minister and the Surveyor-General.

"4. That the said purchase-money was paid by a duly-appointed Government official direct to the Native owners, without a single exception, and with the proper legal formalities.

"5. That one of the conditions insisted upon by the Native Minister at the said interview was that the petitioner was to act in the matter as agent for the Native owners, from whom—as per arrangement with them—he was to obtain his commission on the sale and purchase.

"6. That the petitioner so arranged with the Native owners, and had such arrangement reduced to writing, in both the Native and English languages, in the form of a binding agreement, which was duly read and fully explained by a licensed interpreter to the said owners, who thereupon voluntarily and formally completed the agreement.

"7. That two of the said blocks and a portion of the third were duly purchased, as arranged.

"8. That the said Natives openly expressed their entire satisfaction concerning the transaction.

"9. That, some months after the completion of the purchase of the Kaitaia Block, a store-keeper at Hokianga, named John Webster—

who has for many years nourished towards the petitioner a strong personal animus, due to a written threat addressed to him to have him indicted for compounding a felony for a monetary consideration (he, Webster, being at the time a Justice of the Peace)—induced, for the purpose of being revenged on the petitioner, three of the said Natives to petition Parliament, stating that the petitioner was not their agent for the sale of the said block, and that he was wrongfully retaining from them a portion of their share of the purchase-money without their consent or authority.

"10. That Parliament thereupon set up an inquiry, which, owing to the absences and bitter hostility of Edwin Mitchelson, was unduly delayed and prolonged for three months, thereby causing the petitioner great and unnecessary expense and loss of time.

"11. That, through the interested and biased action of the Hon. Edwin Mitchelson and a section of the Opposition in the House of Representatives, the Government was forced to accept a resolution of the House authorising the Crown Law Officers to prosecute, with the public funds, the petitioner, for the purpose of obtaining from him a refund of his said commission on the sale of the Kaitaia Block."

Mr. SPEAKER said that, as he heard the petitioner attribute interested and biased actions to a member of the House—

Mr. ROLLESTON.—And to a section of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER considered it right to draw the attention of the House to the wording of the petition, as it appeared to him to be contrary to order. In May it was laid down that—

"The language of a petition should be respectful and temperate, and free from . . . offensive imputations upon the character or conduct of Parliament."

And then followed a number of instances in which petitions had been rejected on that ground. In Bourinot, page 270, it would be found,—

"When a petition had been presented, and afterwards found to be out of order on account of a reflection on the debates of the House, or on one of its members, the Lords, on being informed of the fact, have vacated the proceeding, and the member has been given leave to withdraw the petition."

He thought it his duty, on hearing these words, to draw the attention of the House to the matter. Owing to the forms of the House, no question was put for the reception of a petition, but if, in such a case as the present one, in the opinion of the House the petition was not respectfully or properly worded, it was for the House to decide whether it should be admitted or not.

Mr. ROLLESTON would move, That the petition be not received. It reflected on members of the House, and on a very worthy settler in the North, and especially on his honourable friend the member for Eden, in such a manner that the House ought to resent it, and not admit of its being laid on the table.

Mr. BUCKLAND considered it was the duty of the Speaker to say whether the petition should be received or not.

Mr. SPEAKER said that in his opinion the petition was out of order.

Mr. LAWRY asked leave to withdraw the petition.

Sir J. HALL thought that honourable members were bound, before presenting a petition, to assure themselves that it did not contain any offensive language, or anything to slander or libel honourable members.

Mr. MITCHELSON said that the honourable gentleman, having read the petition, and seeing that it contained the reflections it did, had consulted him as to what action he should take in the matter.

Petition withdrawn.

MOANATAIARI TUNNEL.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Minister of Mines, if he will place a sum of money on the supplementary estimates for the purpose of aiding, by way of subsidy or otherwise, the extension of the Moanataiari Tunnel, on the Thames Goldfield? This question involved a matter of importance to the Thames district; and the extension of this tunnel, which was really an underground public road, would open up a large section of the country.

Mr. SEDDON said this question of prospecting at the Thames, either by sinking to lower levels or by extending the tunnels which now existed, was provided for in the Bill before the House, and a great deal of what would be done depended upon the fate of that particular measure.

FIRE-BRIGADES.

Mr. W. C. SMITH asked the Government, if they will place on the supplementary estimates the amount of subsidy usually granted towards the annual fire-brigades' competition? He would point out to the Government that this year the annual fire-brigades' competition was to be held in Napier, and they had taken a great deal of trouble there to make it a great success, and he hoped the Government would see their way to give the usual subsidy towards that competition.

Mr. SEDDON said the usual course would be followed with respect to this matter.

J. A. LLOYD.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Premier, whether he will take into consideration the special case of John Alfred Lloyd, of Onehunga, in the matter of a claim for land for military services? He did not know whether there were very many cases like this, but this seemed to him to be an exceptional one. He would read the following letter of the Crown Lands Commissioner: "Your claim has been decided, and sent on to Wellington, but, as you did not submit it until after the time allowed by the Act, I regret I had not the power to recommend the same, which otherwise I should have been glad to do." So it seemed that in this case the man was entitled to consideration.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE would give this matter full consideration, and see what could be done.

BABY-FARMING.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Justice, whether he proposes to introduce any legislation this session to deal with what appears to be a growing evil in the colony—namely, baby-farming? In the annual report of the Commissioner of Police he found this statement: "That this—namely, baby-farming—exists there can be no doubt, and it appears that children, either by advertisement or otherwise, are placed in the most unsuitable homes"—he presumed the Commissioner meant dens, not homes—"where it is perfectly well understood that the sooner the child dies the better pleased all concerned will be." That was a very disturbing and, he had good reason to believe, a not exaggerated statement, which must have already arrested the attention of the Minister of Justice, and, indeed, of all the members of the Government. Indeed, it must have arrested general attention, and even at this far-advanced stage of the session he thought it would be very desirable if something could be done to abate, if not eradicate, a flagrant cruelty of this kind.

Mr. REEVES said a Bill was being drafted. It would be considered by the Cabinet, and if approved of it would be introduced. If the House would consent to treat the matter as one of urgency it might become law this session.

An Hon. MEMBER asked, were the facts as stated?

Mr. REEVES said he believed there was foundation for them.

NORTH ISLAND ROADS.

Mr. E. M. SMITH asked the Government, if they will lay on the table of this House a return showing for each land district in the North Island the amount of money added to the upset price for roads, also the amount of money expended out of that sum for roadwork up to 31st July, 1898?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the information asked for by the honourable member would be found in the Crown Lands Report laid on the table of the House. They could give the amount of money added to the upset price for roads, but they could not give the expenditure up to that date, because in many cases the work was going on and had not been finished.

OTAHUHU COURTHOUSE.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Premier, whether he has made provision in the public-works estimates for the erection of a Courthouse, and new police dwelling and lock-up, at Otahuhu, in fulfilment of a promise made to that effect by the Hon. Mr. Cadman?

Mr. SEDDON said, as the public-works estimates were not yet settled, the honourable gentleman could hardly ask him if he had made provision for the work.

Mr. BUCKLAND only wished to remind the honourable gentleman of the promise made by Mr. Cadman.

Mr. SEDDON said, having been reminded, he would keep the matter steadily in view.

GOVERNMENT RESIDENCES.

Mr. BUCKLAND asked the Government, in view of the present empty condition of the various Government residences, what steps, if any, they propose to take in the matter? It seemed to him that it was a waste of money to allow the residences to remain in their present condition.

Mr. SEDDON said there was only one of the residences at present empty, and that was the house in Tinakori Road, and he was afraid, at all events so far as the present Ministry were concerned, their present salaries would not allow of one of them taking up his residence in that tenement.

BLUFF NATIVE HOSTELRY.

Mr. PARATA asked the Minister in charge of Native Affairs, What steps the Government intend taking with regard to the petition of Teone Topi Patuki relative to the Native hostility at the Bluff?

Mr. CARROLL said the report of the Native Affairs Committee on this petition recommended that free access to the Native reserve and house at the Bluff should be secured for the Natives, as had hitherto been the case. The access which the Natives enjoyed had not been interfered with, and was not likely to be, as the site could be reached both by sea and by way of the wharf. No further action was therefore needed.

WAIKATO NATIVES.

Mr. TAIPUA asked the Minister in charge of Native Affairs, If he will take immediate steps to relieve the great distress existing at present among the Lower Waikato Natives, which has been caused by the recent heavy floods? He would read the following letter, which had appeared in an Auckland newspaper, and which would explain the object of the question:—

"On the Lower Waikato there are about a hundred Natives (i.e., men, women, and children) who are at present absolutely without food, except what they obtain from the tops of the cabbage-trees, supplemented by worms and a few eels. Occasionally they get a bag of flour on credit from the storekeeper. Last Christmas they lost the whole of their food-supplies by the flood then prevailing. They have recently been cutting flax, but the flood has now destroyed their houses and submerged their lands. They have neither pigs, potatoes, money, nor the opportunity of earning a shilling, the flax-mill being under water."

He would like to ask the Government if they intend to take immediate steps to give these people relief. The circumstances were very exceptional, and it was necessary, if anything was to be done, that it should be done at once.

Mr. CARROLL said steps in this direction had been taken. Instructions had been issued to employ Natives who were able to work on roads, and the Government Agent, Mr. Wilkin-

son, had been authorised to relieve any urgent cases of distress. Everything had been done by the Government to give relief since receiving information in regard to those people.

LIGHTING GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS.

On the motion of Captain RUSSELL, it was ordered, That a return be laid before this House showing the cost, month by month, during the last financial year, of lighting with gas and electricity the Government Buildings, the General Assembly Buildings, Government House, the Government Printing Office, and the judicial and police buildings on Lambton Quay; such return to show the cost, month by month, in the case of each building separately; also, an estimate of the capital cost of providing a suitable plant for and annual cost of lighting those buildings entirely by electricity from one central station, so as to enable the House to judge of the saving or otherwise that would be effected by lighting all these buildings by electric light.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

ADJOURNED DEBATE.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the feeling of the House is with regard to the third reading of this Bill. For my own part, I should not like the Bill to go to its third reading without giving my view upon the Bill, and, to some extent, upon the question generally. The question is one of very large importance, and I think that this measure has been hurried through the House in a way that has not contributed to obtain for the subject the best consideration. Any way, I do not think any apology is necessary on my part for taking up the time of the House for a brief space in stating what I think. I think the country generally will look to honourable members to declare their opinions, and to utter no uncertain sound upon this question. Sir, if voting for this Bill meant promoting temperance on the one hand as against drunkenness on the other, I should have no hesitation, however I might dissent from the details, in voting for the principle, and accepting the details as they might be passed by this House. But that is not the view I take of this Bill. The Bill is to me a new departure, and I think that departure is upon a wrong road. I think that it is a crude and imperfect measure, professing to deal once and for all with a great question, and professing, in the words of the Premier, to satisfy all parties. As is the case with compromises generally, this compromise will not satisfy any party. It does not satisfy the views I hold, and I believe it will not satisfy the views which the prohibitionists, or even the temperance men generally, hold. The two parties are those who want to stop drunkenness on the one hand, and on the other hand those who want to stop drinking, and who have in view the ultimate prohibition of the sale and consumption of alcoholic liquors. With every desire to give support to any scheme that has for its object

the promotion of temperance, I have come to the conclusion that I cannot properly support a Bill which has been hastily put together, which has been rushed through this House, and which, I think, is not likely to effect the object that I have no doubt both sides of the House have in view in discussing this measure. Sir, this Bill and that giving the franchise to women are two Bills which run together very much, and I think that this session they have not been dealt with with that earnestness and sincerity that they should have met with. Certainly, speaking of the former Bill, I think the proposal for the enfranchisement of women has not been fairly treated by Parliament. I do not wish to allude further to that phase of the question; but I am one of those who think that that question has not had fair treatment at the hands of Parliament during the past three years. When you propose to take the electoral roll, as you do under this Bill, and to put women upon it under the other Bill to which I have alluded as the basis for decisions upon the liquor question, I shudder to think of the possible and probable consequences of such a step. I will not be a party, so far as my vote in the House goes, to bringing women into contact with the contaminating and lowering influences which will be brought into play by the united action of these two Bills. I have some hope, though I confess it is but a faint one—I have some hope that woman's franchise will not turn out as I anticipate. It is possible that you may introduce women into the representative system without the evils which some—myself among them—anticipate, especially if it be not guarded with the safeguard which I think should be attached to it, in the case of men and women alike, of the issue of electoral rights; but it is not probable—it is not, I think, possible—to introduce women into this new system of direct voting on matters of administration in connection with the liquor trade without making confusion worse confounded—without making it worse than anything that has yet taken place in the history of popular government. Sir, I cannot be a party to it. All admit—both sides of the House, and both parties, admit—that this question of the liquor trade has to be dealt with. All admit that the evils of drunkenness have to be coped with. All admit that the temptation is now too great to those who unfortunately are unable to resist it; but to proceed on wrong principles in dealing with this great problem is, as I believe, to prejudice the cause of temperance for a long time to come. The solution of this great problem will not be found by rushing into “the falsehood of extremes.” The present law has not, as I think, had a fair opportunity—it has not had fair-play. It has been the victim, as I believe, of various adverse circumstances and adverse influences. It has been the victim partly of apathy on the part of the public. It has been the victim, I venture to think, to some extent, of apathy on the part of the temperance party, and to some extent of the Prohibitionist party—though I do not

accuse them altogether of apathy. It has indeed been the victim of too much zeal on their part, I think, and of too little judgment. It has been the victim in this House also of adverse influences, and, I think, of hasty and ill-considered legislation. The principle on which the Act of 1882 went was this: that the people were to be kept in close touch with the decision of this question of the liquor traffic; and in an ill-advised moment, as I think, this Parliament did this: It took away the annual elections of Licensing Boards and instituted triennial elections. I think that was not trusting the people. I think, had you kept the people—the common-sense of the mass of the people—in touch with this question, what occurred at Sydenham would have been modified by the consideration that the elections were close at hand, and the people would thus practically have prevented extreme measures from being taken. There is also, as I think, another thing that impaired the operation of that Act. I think it was the determination on the part of the prohibitionist party, here and in England alike, to exercise their opinions cheaply. Cheap virtue, Sir, was the bane of the working of that Act—a determination on the part of the people to carry out a great reform at the expense of justice, and at the expense of other people. I think that has been the fatal mistake on the part of the prohibition party. Our great hope, according to my view, lies in gradually working out a great social reform: it lies in evolution, not violence. You cannot hope to legislate satisfactorily except concurrently with the education of the population, and with the progress of popular sympathy with the movement which you seek to put upon the statute-book. To seek for a solution of this problem in the abandonment of great principles—of principles which lie at the root of representative government—is to throw back all probability of dealing with the question successfully. This Bill, if passed now, will, to my mind, prejudice the chance next year, and after the appeal to the people, of legislation passing which might deal more comprehensively, and, as I think, on a better basis, with this great question. The principle of applying the counting of heads of a bare majority to the determination of a question involving administrative functions, or calling for the exercise of the judicial faculty, is going backwards instead of forwards. This principle, to my mind, leads to the tyrannical overriding of the rights of the minority, and is destructive of freedom. I have never yet been able to go back from the principles which were embodied by one of England's greatest Liberals in a speech upon the permissive Bill. I allude to Mr. Bright. He says,—

“What is meant by the representative system is not that you should have the vote of thousands of persons taken upon a particular question of legislation, but that you should have men selected from those thousands having the confidence of the majority of the thousands, and that they should meet and should discuss questions of legislation, and should decide

Mr. Rolleston

what measures should be enacted; and therefore in this particular question I should object altogether to disposing of the interest of a great many men, and of a great many families, and of a great amount of property—I should object altogether to allow such a matter to be decided by the vote of two-thirds of the ratepayers of any parish or town. By this Bill they would have the power to shut up at once, or rather at the end of the current year, as far as the sale of these articles is concerned, every hotel, inn, publichouse, and beer-shop throughout the country. I say throughout the country, but of course I allude to such subdivisions of the country as the Bill may indicate. There would, of course, be a difference, for some parishes would shut them up, and some would not; but that is not very much an argument against the Bill."

And that same principle was laid down the other day in words which I shall venture to ask the House to listen to, because they express my meaning much better than I could myself express it. The words are these:—

"When there is a nice and delicate mechanical work to be done we do not use sledge-hammers, nor apply the power of a steam-engine direct to the finer mechanism which we use to achieve the desired result. The voice of the people is the mighty engine which animates society and supplies the motive-power of all good government, but the attempt to apply this power directly to the details of administrative government is a reversion to primitive practice of a most dangerous and pernicious type. History abounds with the evils of such a form of government. The direct action of an unreasoning public opinion on details of administration cannot fail to prove unjust, tyrannical, and revolutionary. Even where the people *en masse* are actuated by sound general principles, they have not, and cannot possess, such a knowledge of the details or facts as would be necessary to enable them to apply those principles equitably and reasonably to particular cases."

That quotation is from the *Evening Post* of this city, in a leading article written with remarkable force and remarkable vigour, and I think it is well worth the consideration of this House. In this particular case my belief is that the proposal of direct veto—the proposals of the extreme prohibitionists, would fail, not only because they are based on a wrong principle, as I have endeavoured to show, and because they are at variance with constitutional practice, but because, as I think, the proposal aims at a result which experience has shown to be practically impossible of attainment. Absolute prohibition, I think, is shown, by experience in other countries, to be a failure. That is the result of all that I have read about the matter. It has led to habits of drinking in bulk—not retail drinking, but drinking in cellars and out-of-the-way places; and it has led to sly grog-selling, which will lead, as I think, to what is a degradation to the population—namely, the constant evasion of the law. I myself am prepared to

advance on the present law. As I have said, I think legislation of this kind is rather a matter of evolution than one of sudden or violent change. I am prepared to advance, though not in the direction of the direct veto. I believe you will be doing wrong if you attempt to supersede your whole system of parliamentary government by adopting proposals such as those which are involved in this direct system of voting which is proposed by the prohibitionists. It hands over to minorities the freedom of majorities. Take this particular proposal that we have in this Bill. You have in your electoral district, say, some ten thousand people—I take these round numbers for the sake of convenience—you have upon your electoral roll, without women, some two thousand names, and if you take three-fifths of one-half of the people upon the roll you will have this result: that some six hundred persons will determine the liberties, and curtail the liberties, of some ten thousand people. That principle, to my mind, is repugnant to what the honourable member for Inangahua would call democratic principles. That is not dealing with government by majorities; it is dealing with it in a manner which enables a minority of the people to override the majority. The question, to my mind, will not be settled by doing violence to the sense of justice which animates a free people. It will not be settled by taking away the means of livelihood from a class of men who are carrying on what must be admitted to be, even by extreme people, a legitimate trade—a trade in which, I venture to think, only the co-operation and help of the Legislature is needed to enable those who follow it to carry it on in a respectable manner. Strictly and, as I believe, legally there is no compensation to be given under the existing law if fairly carried out as a measure of regulation. The pity is that one section of the community should have endeavoured to override what is the principle of existing legislation, and to go beyond regulation, and make that which was intended for a regulation a means of imperative prohibition in a very injudicious manner. If for temperance principles you substitute prohibition—if you alter your tribunal, and substitute a count of heads for a judicial body determining upon the merits of the questions submitted to them—you have no right to do so, according to my view, without a fair and reasonable consideration of the interests involved. To support confiscatory proposals by the abuse of publicans, as though they were outlaws and enemies of society, is going the wrong way to attain the proper end. Intemperance, according to my view, will not be cured by intolerance. Great social reforms will not be worked out by injustice. This is what is said by one who will be admitted to be a great Liberal—Mr. Gladstone. He says,—

"If you bring upon a publican a set of new conditions which he could never have anticipated, then you are bound to consider some modification of the effects of a sharp and sudden rule which totally alters the practice of a district."

I have heard it stated recently, during the past two days, that the publicans look on this Bill with favour, and that they do so because they believe it to be inoperative from the prohibitionists' point of view—that, in fact, it is, so far as a working Bill is concerned, practically a publicans' Bill. That is what is said. My own opinion is that it will not be so—that it will not be inoperative, if the women are on the roll. This Bill, as I have said, runs very much with the other Bill; and the question whether this principle—a principle which, as I have said, I do not agree with—will work out to reduce the publichouses depends, I think, very largely upon that one point, whether you get women on the roll. I believe that it will reduce publichouses. The provision which adds the votes given for prohibition to those given for a reduction will, I think, do this. Anyhow, I maintain that it would be unfair to vote for a Bill on the ground that it will be inoperative. I believe, myself, that the number of publichouses will be reduced. That is one of the first things that ought to be done, and I think they can be fairly reduced, if we go to work in the proper way, under the existing law. But I am prepared to go further than that. I do not think that the question is in a satisfactory position under the existing law, though I think that if that law were properly worked great results might be attained even under it. I am prepared to go further, through the agency of Parliament, as representative of the people—because I believe that Parliament is the proper body representative of the voice of the people—and I am prepared to do this: I should support legislation which proposed to limit by Parliament the number of houses in proportion to the population, and to devise, concurrently with that, fair means of dealing with the reductions rendered necessary—that is, without ignoring existing interests where those interests were unfairly prejudiced. I believe, also, we ought to enforce the provisions we have on the statute-book for the prevention of adulteration. I think we have entirely neglected that during the past years, and in neglecting that we have really been doing a very great wrong. I am in favour of stricter regulations with regard to early closing. I would have provisions for discouraging bar drinking, and for putting a premium upon houses paying more attention to comfort and rational social life. And we want stricter police supervision—much stricter. I refer honourable members to the report before us from the Commissioner of Police. He states distinctly that there are required, in respect to the action of the police, greater facilities for obtaining convictions, and for insisting upon the proper conduct of publichouses than now afforded. I will go further than this: I say that the present law will never be satisfactorily administered in respect to publichouses while the police are the only people to supervise and inspect them. I think we want a system of inspection by others than the police. We want inspection which is not connected with the detection of crime. It is one of the points in

connection with the police that the publichouses at present are used by them to obtain evidence to secure convictions, and it is almost impossible for them to exercise the supervision they ought to maintain. I think, also, that, as compared with the existing law, we ought to have larger districts. This Bill proposes larger districts, but they are grotesquely large. This provision, as well as several other provisions of the Bill, will practically have the effect of making it inoperative. It will be absolutely impossible to take such a district as the District of Ellesmere will be, and to hope that the Act will work well in such a district as that. Sir, what possibility will there be for carrying out the Act in cases where we may have prohibition in force in one parish or district, and immediately over the borders prohibition not in force? I say that the absolute impossibility of carrying it out carries on the face of it the condemnation of any law that we may try to put on the statute-book. I hope we shall go in the direction of avoiding extremes. It will not be, I believe, by a policy of prohibition that we shall strike at the root of this evil of drunkenness. It will not be by preventing the healthy exercise of the moral faculties, it will not be by weakening the moral sinews, that we shall create a manly and virtuous population. We must strengthen, by exercise, "the wrestling thews that throw the world." It will not be by entirely removing temptation from their path, and guarding men as though they were in prison, that we shall promote the growth of those faculties the larger possession of which makes one man better than another. It is, as I believe, by throwing down social barriers, by lessening social estrangements, by elevating the tastes of the people, and by cultivating the pursuit of pleasure and recreation amongst the masses—it is, in short, by united effort for the amelioration of the social position, the material welfare, of all classes of society that we shall strike at the root of this evil. I shall record my vote against this Bill, because it is based on a wrong principle, because I think it is crude and imperfect, and because it will prejudice a proper dealing with this question, which should be dealt with on different lines after a general election. I could not lend myself to putting on the statute-book a Bill which will simply satisfy nobody, and which will not touch beneficially the great question that it professes to deal with.

Sir R. STOUT.—I think the honourable member who has just sat down ought to have moved, holding the opinions he has expressed, that this Bill be read a third time this day six months. I shall, at any rate, move that motion, and, before I deal with the Bill, or some of its provisions, I shall say one or two words about the quotations which the honourable gentleman has just made. He made quotations from speeches by the late John Bright and by Mr. Gladstone. Any one who knows the position John Bright took up in regard to Liberalism is not surprised at his being antagonistic to the permissive principle. John Bright was a

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Liberal of the individualist type. He opposed all factory legislation. To the kind of legislation we have had in New Zealand for some years past he was a decided enemy. He was one of the old school of Radicals. He believed in allowing the State practically to do nothing which could be avoided, and in allowing the individual to do everything; and, consequently, he was against all such regulations as we propose. The proper position for those who take that view is that there should be free-trade in liquor, and I submit that there is no standing-ground between absolute free-trade and absolute local control. As for Mr. Gladstone, it is true that he was at one time opposed to the permissive Bill unless compensation were given, but the advance of Liberalism in England has been such since those days that Mr. Gladstone has advanced along with it. At one time, also, he was in favour of the union of Church and State, and yet it was he who, at a later stage, disestablished the Church in Ireland; and so, if one refers to Mr. Gladstone's speeches, made at different periods, it will be found that at one time he made as strong speeches against Home Rule as he has more recently made in advocacy of it. Mr. Gladstone has always been one who would not venture to proceed far in advance of public opinion, but he has been ever ready to change his views so as to keep abreast of that public opinion. It is his Government that introduced the Direct Veto Bill—the Local Control Bill—and in this connection I need only quote what he said so far back as 1880. I quote from an extract in an article by Archdeacon Farrar in a recent magazine; and no doubt it was from a correct knowledge of the subject that Mr. Gladstone thus spoke of the drink curse:—

“It has been said that greater calamities—greater because more continuous—have been inflicted on mankind by intemperance than by the three great historic scourges of war, famine, and pestilence combined. That is true, and it is the measure of our discredit and disgrace.”

And it is because it has been found that there is really no mode of dealing with this question except that of giving the people the local control that the Gladstone Government has been forced to propose such a measure as is now before the House of Commons. Let us see, further, what is meant by this argument that you are not to give local control. I shall leave out of consideration the question of prohibition at present, for I will come to that later on. We are told that, if you are to give local control, you will destroy the means of livelihood of some people—that you may not consider the thing in a judicial spirit. Now, what is meant by that? The honourable gentleman who has just spoken says it is wrong to deprive people of the means of livelihood in selling liquor. Why, then, should bar-drinking be discouraged? There may be men attending these bars whose only means of livelihood is by selling in a bar. Why, then, discourage their means of earning a livelihood? Why draw the line there at all? There may be men earning a living, and whose

only means of doing so is by selling after hours. Why should they be deprived of the right of earning a living? Logically put, the speech of the honourable member is that all regulation is wrong, because, if the State has the right to regulate the traffic, where are you to draw the line as to what regulation means? You cannot draw it merely at regulating bar drinking, at adulteration, or at limiting the hours of sale. You must give local control. And now I come to what the temperance people ask. They do not ask this Parliament for prohibition. They ask that this question should be sent to the people, and, if the people say that licenses shall continue, they are willing that they should continue; but it must be the voice of the majority. There are districts in which this question has been put, and they obey the law. But what is the other question that they ask? They also ask that there shall be put to the people the question of No license. Why should not the people have the control? It is a pure question of administration. If the State has the right to license at all, it has also the right to refuse to license. If it has the right to refuse licenses, the next question is, Who constitute the State? Is it the people of the district, or is it this Parliament? You cannot have this treated as a judicial question; and to treat the Licensing Committees as judges, when as a fact they are pure administrators, is entirely wrong in this Bill. They are, I say, pure administrators. What was the Warden, in the early days of the colony, when he granted or refused licenses to dig or mine for gold? He was treated, and he acted, as a pure administrator, as a pure executive officer; and that was decided by our Supreme Court. He had the right to say, “I will grant the license,” or “I will refuse the license,” and his decision could not be reviewed by the superior Court, because he was not a judicial officer. What we submit is that, so far as this licensing question is concerned, it is not a judicial question, but a question of local control, and therefore it is unfair to say that those who are prohibitionists, or temperance people, are asking for prohibition. They are not asking for prohibition. They are simply asking for local control—they merely ask Parliament to give the people the right of controlling the liquor traffic. And I ask, is that not Liberalism? What is the meaning of Liberalism if it is not that the majority of the people should govern or rule? What is the other alternative? It is that the minority shall rule, and not the majority. Let us see what is the meaning of that. If you attempt to deal with the question of licensing, you must admit that somebody must license. Who shall license? What is the meaning of the Bill? I say that this Bill means that the minority shall license and control the traffic. We will suppose that in a certain district there are a thousand votes, and that 401 out of that thousand have voted that the licenses shall continue practically as they are at present. What will happen? That 401's decision will go against the votes of the 599, and that minority

will have the right to say to the district, "You are to have the publichouses continuing here." The 401 are to have the control, not the 599. What, then, is the point? The point is really this: Are you going to allow your liquor business to be controlled in that way or not? This Bill allows the minority to have the control, and not the majority. And I submit, therefore, that it strikes at the root of popular government. It is said, however, that it will be unjust to allow the majority to rule. Well, there can be only one section of a people ruling—either the minority or the majority. If it is unjust to allow the majority to rule, is it just to allow the minority to rule? But it is said that this is admitting the right of the State to interfere with the liberty of the subject. What is the object of licensing? When you proceed to draw up a Licensing Bill you start with, "Whereas it is desirable to limit individual liberty." You have to start with that,—that is, practically, what every Licensing Bill means. You are driven into this position: that it is wise for Parliament to declare that the minority shall rule, because that is practically what the Bill does. If you say that the minority has a right to rule, because that is a lesser limitation of individual liberty than to have the majority ruling, where is your logic then? Why should not the minority also rule in other matters, if that principle is to come into play? Why should they not rule in bringing into operation the Factories Act, the Industrial Conciliation Act, or the Shop-hours Act? Why should not the minority rule there? Has it been proposed that they should, in any degree? You are asking the minority to rule in a case where, as stated by Mr. Gladstone, you have an evil to deal with that is causing greater injury to the community than war, famine, and pestilence combined. You say, in effect, "Notwithstanding all the evils of the drink traffic we will not allow the people the right of control over it." I repeat over and over again that what is termed the extreme temperance party are in a minority. I know that; and I believe they will remain in the minority for many years to come. They do not want their minority turned into a majority. But what is this you say? "You have no right to rule; you are only a minority of those who are interested in the liquor traffic. They are in the majority, and the majority must rule." But it is the Bill that says the minority are to rule. Those who support the measure are not willing to take the risk of being proved to be in the minority. In some districts the temperance party are now, practically, in the majority, and they say, "In these districts we should rule." In those districts in which they are in the minority—and perhaps in two-thirds of the districts they are in the minority—they hope in time to be in the majority, and they can only look to education and discussion to turn their minority into a majority. What does this Bill do? It not only allows the minority to rule, but it gives a premium to people to stop away from the ballot. By having this half-on-the-roll voting provision

in the Bill the principle of free ballot is entirely destroyed. We may as well destroy the ballot altogether. I understand the reason why the women's franchise did not become law last session was that the principle of the ballot was invaded. It was to defend the principle of the ballot that that reform was lost. We have a right to defend the principle of the ballot at all hazards, and on all occasions—that is to say, the right of secret voting should not be invaded. But what does this Bill do? It destroys the secrecy of the ballot; and I will show how it does that. We will suppose that a man is canvassing for votes. He may be a wine and spirit merchant, and he goes to those in his employ and says, "How are you going to vote? I wish you not to vote on this question. I wish you to abstain from voting at all." He knows, then, at once that if they vote at all they must be voting against him: and, that being so, the whole principle of the ballot is gone, because the question will not be—whether they are his employes or not—as to how they vote, but the question will be whether they vote at all, and, if they vote at all, then their action must be against what he desires.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That applies to all voting.

Sir R. STOUT.—Pardon me, it does not; because there is nothing in any Act, except that referring to loans to local bodies—no provision in our laws—which allows an absentee's vote to be counted as if it were cast in a particular direction. Suppose the vote is declared void—that half the number has not voted—what is the result? Why, here are the questions put to the electors. They are in section 12, and they are—(1) Whether the present number of licenses is to continue; (2) whether the number of any such licenses is to be reduced; (3) whether any licenses are to be granted. But if there is no poll where half the electors have not voted, how is this first question answered? Why, this first question is answered, that the number of licenses is to continue. So that, practically, if they abstain from voting, everybody who is absent, every person who is sick, and some who are dead, are supposed to have voted that the licenses are to continue. And therefore the contest at a licensing election will not be, Do you vote for prohibition, or not? It will be, that they are not to vote at all, those who are against this direct control being brought in. It will be seen at once that the whole principle of the ballot is gone, under this Bill; and I submit that those who said they could not give women rights to vote without going to the ballot-box because the ballot would be invaded have introduced a Bill which strikes a greater blow at the ballot than was ever struck by the electoral rights to women. Then, in what way is this Bill to be a settlement of the question? Does this Bill give greater control than existed before? Certainly not. What was the existing law? The existing law, under subsection (5) of section 81 of the Act of 1881, is that a Licensing Committee, on its own motion, has the right

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to say that a license is not required in a neighbourhood—that the locality in which such premises are situated will be disturbed if a license is granted. That power is swept away from the Committee altogether. The Committee now have no such discretion left to them. The Committee now, Sir, has no discretion left in dealing with anything except, practically, the question of reduction; and even in that its discretion is limited. Why, I do not know what the Government has copied in proposing such a thing. What I saw in a comic paper illustrates what is the case here—put a penny in the slot and you will get out a certain decision. The Committee is invested now with certainly no judicial functions, with no administrative functions; and this is brought into an Act, I believe, for the first time. For three or four hundred years it has been the law in England, and certainly in New Zealand, ever since we have had a Licensing Act, that the Committee was to be armed with a certain discretion as to giving or refusing licenses. But this discretion is now swept away. The Committee has no power to deal with the giving of licenses, even though the peace of the neighbourhood may be invaded. What does this mean? It means this: Does any man mean to say that property is not injured by having an hotel near it, especially for residence? I should like to see some people opening up hotels, and then it would be seen if the residents did not object. Why would they object? Because in nine cases out of ten the peace of the neighbourhood is invaded. What is going to happen under this Bill? I will give an illustration of what is going to happen. There are districts in this colony that have year by year prevented licensed houses being there. There is the District of Linwood, near Christchurch, in which year by year no licensed houses have been allowed. Then, there is the District of Sydenham, in which the battle has been fought, and practically won. What will happen under this Bill? Why, Linwood is joined with Christchurch.

Mr. REEVES.—No, it is not, Sir Robert; it is joined on to Avon.

Sir R. STOUT.—Where there are licenses?

Mr. REEVES.—Yes.

Sir R. STOUT.—Exactly the same thing. And what will happen? You may transfer the license from Avon to Linwood; and you may place amongst the Linwood people, who for years and years have determined that no licensed house shall exist there, a house for the sale of intoxicating liquors. And so also in the case of Sydenham. You can, then, transfer licenses from Christchurch to Sydenham; and, though it has been declared that liquor being sold there is illegally sold, you may transfer licenses on both Linwood and Sydenham—practically the dwelling-places of the working-classes, who do not desire to have publichouses amongst them; yet they are to have licenses forced upon them by this Bill. What, then, is this Bill? This Bill is entirely conceived in the interests of the licensed

victuallers—entirely in the interests of the trade; and the trade knows it. Why, Sir, I have heard in more than one place that the passage of this Bill will at once put an enormous premium on hotel property. The honourable member may laugh; but I undertake to say the publicans know their business better than members of this House, and if you ask them they will tell you this, if they speak the truth—if they speak their own opinions. Now, Sir, I cannot understand men who came to this House pledged to give local option to the people voting for this Bill. I cannot understand men who came here pledged to vote against any alteration of the licensing-law voting for this Bill. If either of that class vote for this Bill, they are practically violating their election-pledges. What do I ask? What do those who are with me on this question ask? They ask that this matter should be deferred until after the general elections. Sir, it has been said that if you get the women on the roll this Bill will practically end in the obtaining of prohibition. What does this mean? That the women are going to vote for temperance: is that what it means? Then, we temperance people are willing they shall vote at the general election for temperance, and that their votes shall be cast for the return of members to this House who will give us a real Bill of local control, and not the sham Bill which this measure is. I ask this House to pause. This Bill is of such a character that, unfortunately as I regard it, this question is going to be the question at the elections. Apparently, it is going to be the question in the town and suburban electorates; it may not affect the country electorates so much. Do not let honourable members suppose that this Bill is going to be an end of the question. It is only accentuating the struggle which is to take place in a few months. And therefore I ask, why not let us trust the people at the general election? This Bill is giving them less control. It is not giving them greater control. Its very title is a misnomer. I say it is taking away the control from the people which they possess in the Licensing Committees. That is swept away by repealing subsection (5) of section 81 of the Licensing Act of 1881. Does the three-fifths vote give them any control? It gives them no control whatever. What does the other control give? It may be said the licenses are not to be increased. In how many districts would the vote be carried under the Act of 1881? I venture to say, not in half a dozen districts of the colony—not in these large districts. The publicans themselves have not asked for an increase of licenses, because they have a monopoly. What is this House asked to do? This House is practically asked—this House which is supposed to be a Liberal House, with a majority of Liberals within its walls—to go back upon Liberalism and to declare that you cannot trust the people and give them votes to control the traffic in intoxicating liquors. I argue this apart from the question of Prohibition or No prohibition. I

again repeat, this question of prohibition is not within measurable distance of us; but I say that what we ask for is local control, and all I ask for is local control. If the temperance people are in a minority, they will remain in a minority with local control. If they are in a majority, they have a right to have their views expressed and carried out. What right have you to say that the minority shall rule—that you are, practically, to have three-year licenses, if the minority choose to say so?—because that is what it amounts to. Every one absent counts as voting for the licenses continuing. What does that mean? That there will be no voting on the day of election,—that the liquor party will not vote. Who is to vote? Sir, the thing is perfectly plain. This Bill, I believe, is a Bill more in favour of the liquor traffic than if I had met the Licensed Victuallers' Association and asked them to come to some compromise. I believe the Association would have given a more reasonable Bill to the temperance party than this measure. That is my opinion, and I believe I am speaking what is correct, from what I have heard. Without taking up more of the time of the House, I move, That this Bill be read a third time this day six months.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Mr. Speaker, looking back on the sudden rise and hurried treatment of this question by the Government, I think very few in this House can feel much satisfaction with the result which has now been brought about. As the last honourable member has mentioned, the conviction will be present to the mind of almost everybody in the House that this Bill will not be considered a settlement of the question, even if it passes the other Chamber. Stress has been laid by the honourable member for Inangahua on the more objectionable features of the Bill with reference to voting; but there are other features which also should be referred to in considering the general scope of the measure. First of all, I would refer to what I consider a very serious blot, and that is the disability of women introduced into this Bill. No woman who is not a widow, or who, if married, has not a separation-order, can possibly, whatever her qualifications, hold a license. This is a false and retrograde step. While we see the whole trend of change in the law of property going in the direction of taking away disabilities from women, and while we in this Parliament—in this very session—are ostensibly anxious to emancipate woman from her last thralldom of political disability by granting to her the electoral franchise, we find a paltry and unworthy grudge introduced into this measure by refusing elective Committees the right to decide without limitation on the qualifications of applicants for licenses. Then there are the invertebrate provisions as to voting. I believe there is no holding-ground at all if we depart from the principle of majorities. If the power is not to be given to a majority, why to three-fifths rather than to four-sevenths, or any other fraction? Under the present Act the majority of the ratepayers can decide that there shall

be, or shall not be, an increase in the number of licenses. The present Licensing Committees are elected by a majority of the ratepayers, and these Committees can absolutely wipe out every license in a district. But by this Bill we are asked to go back on that state of things, and to require a three-fifths majority, on the further condition of half the electors recording their votes. The amendment I sought to introduce into the Bill would have struck out that absurd condition as to one-half voting, and would have allowed the questions as to retention or reduction of licenses to be decided in each instance by an absolute majority of voters. No doubt I proposed to add a qualification as to the more serious question of total prohibition, by requiring that the majority should be an actual majority of the whole of those on the roll; but I consider, for my own part, that this was a precaution that was unnecessary, because I hold the view that a poll under any Bill such as this will be an almost exhaustive poll of the people. The questions to be referred will for some time, at any rate, be such as must stir the mind of almost every individual who has a right to vote. Then, there is a subject which has not been touched upon at all as yet, so far as I know, in regard to the Bill, and that is the question of compensation. I know it is an unpopular and it may be a thorny question to touch, but it is one which deserves consideration. I dismiss at once all idea of the local rates being made to compensate the withdrawal or the cancellation of licenses in a district. I dismiss that as impracticable. Then, there is the suggestion as to mutual assurance among licensees by increased fees, so as to form a fund to indemnify those who may lose their licenses without personal blame; but such a scheme would necessarily fail in the case of prohibition. I would prefer to look upon the matter rather from the opposite standpoint, by considering how undesirable it would be if in a district on one day there were a considerable number of licensed houses and on the following morning none at all. My proposal, on the report stage of the Bill, was that, in the event of prohibition being voted in a district, the application of the vote should be distributed over the triennial period; and I think this would mitigate the change to the trade, and would be in the interests of fairness and good government. In conclusion, I come to what I consider the greatest defect in the measure. I say that it is only a partial treatment of the question. It deals only with the retailing of spirituous liquors. I cannot understand how the Government can imagine that they are dealing with the great vice of drunkenness if they are only going to legislate against the retail trade. Why, it is legislating for or against—just as the question of freedom or constraint be viewed as affecting—the poor man. The passing of this Bill, and the bringing into operation of the prohibitive clauses, would not touch the rich man at all. He has only to order and pay for, as I presume he often does now, two gallons instead of a glass; and

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if there be prohibition in a district, and the clubs are closed—clubs as I understand them at present—the rich man's club will not be affected in the slightest degree. With such clubs the change would only mean a matter of book-keeping; they will have their cellars, and members will consume the contents among themselves at their leisure. We shall have the rich clubs continuing, practically, as they are now, perhaps under more exclusive auspices, and everything else in the district closed. I make these remarks as summarising my objections to the third reading of the Bill. I oppose the Bill on the ground that it is only a partial treatment of the question, and that this partial treatment is full of inconsistencies.

Mr. HOGG.—Sir, this Bill has had a somewhat rough passage through Committee, but it has survived the tempest, and I believe I am not far wrong in saying that it is likely to survive the further attempt that is being made to wreck it. The honourable member for Inangahua, whose opposition to the Bill has been persistent all through, has again and again endeavoured to divide the House into fragments, but so far the main features of the Bill as originally introduced have been retained. The question which I think the House has to consider is, whether this Bill is demanded. Is it demanded by the country or by any particular section of the electors? Well, we know for a fact that for some years the battle has been raging between what is called the prohibitionist party and the licensed victuallers. We also know that the party that on the present occasion has led the assault and brought the question into such prominence as it has attained is not the party of the licensed victuallers but the temperance party, and the gentleman who has been their leader in this matter is the honourable gentleman who now wishes to have this legislation postponed till after the next election. Well, Sir, I never expected that this Bill, or any other Bill dealing with this question, would be altogether satisfactory. We know very well that the question is one of such an extremely wide character that it is impossible to produce a measure that will give anything like general, not to say universal, satisfaction. There are two parties whom I regard as extremists—the prohibition party on the one hand, and the brewers and licensed victuallers on the other. They are the implacables, and it is a well-known fact that implacables will never be satisfied with any species of legislation that could possibly be introduced. But I ask this question: Does this Bill remove, even temporarily, from the arena of practical politics a disturbing and very dangerous element? Is it a partial solution—because I believe a complete solution is absolutely unattainable—of a knotty question? Is it a step forwards or is it really a step backwards? Let us turn for a moment to the present Licensing Act, and what do we find? We find it does not give the direct veto—that it does not give the control of the licensing question to the people of the colony. We find it by no means gives the

control to the majority, but, on the contrary, hands over the control of the publichouses to a very small fragment of every community—simply to the ratepayers; and no gentleman in this House knows it better than the honourable member for Inangahua. He knows positively that the publicans of New Zealand are completely at the mercy, at the present time, of a very small section of each community. In the first place, the colony is divided into small licensing districts, and in the second place only a small portion in each district are able to vote on any licensing question. Why, Sir, what are these Licensing Committees? I maintain that the Committees that are elected now are a miserable mockery. They do not represent the people by any means; they are simply a few tradesmen selected by a few ratepayers to deal with the publicans, who are their tools for the time being. I reckon there is no occupation in New Zealand—no trade so thoroughly insecure, so humiliated, so oppressed and degraded as that of the licensed victualler. No man in New Zealand occupies so humiliating a position as the publican. Well, what does this Bill do? In the first place, I would ask, Does it not increase the areas of the licensing districts? And will it be denied for a moment that the licensing districts require to be increased? We know very well, all over the colony, that the licensing districts—or most of them—are so absolutely insignificant as to be altogether ridiculous. In my own constituency every little road district is a licensing district. The counties are divided into ridings, and each one is a licensing district. In some of these districts, where Committees have to be formed, we find one publichouse; in another a solitary accommodation-house; and in another in my own electorate there is no publichouse at all. I refer now to the District of Mauriceville. According to the theory of the prohibitionists and of many temperance advocates—I do not wish to say anything disparaging regarding them, because I believe they are thoroughly sincere in what they desire, and are doing a vast amount of good—but, according to the theory of those people, the district in which there are no publichouses ought to be a sort of Elysium, where every settler is wealthy and blessed with numerous advantages. But what do we find? In the district I refer to the township is stunted and has never grown, and the settlers, so far from being wealthy, as they should be according to theory, inform me that the money that should be circulated amongst them, and which should be improving their properties, is going to Masterton on the one hand and to Eketahuna on the other. When the settlers want a little enjoyment, instead of spending their money in their own neighbourhood, they travel to the nearest township where there are publichouses. This does not bear out the theory of the prohibitionists or the temperance people. Then, under the present system we know very well that the licensed houses—their contents and their landlords—have deteriorated—that the trade has declined. The brewers' tied

houses, for instance, in my opinion are excrescences on the trade, and ought to be removed. But the question is, Are the people ripe for prohibition? I do not believe it. Do they wish to control the traffic? There is no doubt of it, and we are here to give effect to the people's wishes. This Bill, as I have said already, not only increases the size of the districts, but it gives the control of the traffic, which is now in the hands of a few persons, absolutely to the whole of the electors—to the people of the colony. I admit that in my opinion, there is one defect in this Bill. I believe in the simple majority. That is the only portion of the Bill that I disagree with. I do not think it is necessary for three-fifths to carry a poll—I would rather have a simple majority. At the same time, I think it is desirable, if the minority is not to rule, that a certain portion of the electors should be required to vote before a whole crowd of men, and a trade in which a large amount of capital is embarked, are permitted to be ruined. Well, there are certain things which the Bill, I believe, is designed to do. It will give effect to the wishes of the people—not of a fragment of the people, but of the bulk of the people. If it is true, as the honourable gentleman who last spoke has remarked, that the prohibition party are in a minority, then, I say, it is their duty to endeavour—if they are in the right, as they no doubt believe they are—it is their duty to endeavour to educate the people to such an extent that in the course of a little time they may command a majority; and when that time arrives I am satisfied the members of this House will only be too well pleased to see their wishes given effect to. Then, Sir, I disagree with those who think that this Bill will produce no beneficial effect upon the trade. My own impression is that the people are so dissatisfied with the way in which certain public-houses are now conducted that you will find on the very first opportunity they will roll up to the poll and will insist upon a reduction of the present licenses. And if this reduction takes place, what will be the result? It will be this: that there will be less competition, and, at the same time, I believe we shall have better hotels; that the houses will be much better conducted, and that they will be in better hands than they have been in for years past. The effect of this Bill will be, also, to improve the quality of the Licensing Committees. In the first place, the electors will have a larger number to draw upon: they will be able to make a much better selection than they are able to make now. As it is at the present time, in many instances there is really no selection at all. The difficulty is to get a few tradesmen who are willing to sit upon the Committee at all, and in many instances there is virtually no election. It is notorious that publicans and others have often to plead, and plead very hard, too, to get prominent men to give the time necessary to attend these meetings and form the Committee. Then, Sir, I think there is another satisfactory feature in the Bill, and

that is this: It gives to the publican who manages his business in a manner that is satisfactory to his customers and to the general public a more secure tenure than he now enjoys. We know very well that from year to year the publicans are in a most insecure position, that they have no encouragement to expend money in properly furnishing hotels and keeping them in repair, and they are subjected to an undue amount of competition. You cannot blame the Committees in these small licensing districts. Most of them have an interest in getting as many hotels as possible licensed. They look upon it in this light: If they are butchers, bakers, grocers, and so on, they say to themselves, "The more hotels we have the more trade we are likely to have, and this will bring grist to the mill. Let us license every one who comes forward and makes application." Under the present Bill, however, there is a restriction placed upon the number of licenses, and there will be a great amount of difficulty in licensing a new house: the tendency, I believe, will be the other way; and if it is the other way, the result will be that the houses will be improved, the quality of the landlords will be improved, and, competition being kept within due bounds, the public will be better served than it is now. Then, again, we have another valuable clause inserted in the Bill—a clause I look upon as being extremely valuable—and that is the clause inserted, I believe, by the honourable member for Heathcote, which makes indorsements for infringements of the Act permanent. The indorsements are not to be made, as they are now, against the licensee, but against the hotel itself. That will have the effect, in my opinion, of extinguishing a very bad class of hotels which have risen up since the present Act came into existence. It will do away, I hope, in the course of a few years with a good many of these tied houses,—a good many of these houses which we find, in every large centre particularly, very badly conducted—houses that belong to wine-merchants, or are the property of brewers, who simply use them as snares to induce men with a little amount of capital to become tenants, and to improve them to the extent of their capital; but directly they get the benefit of these men's money they take the opportunity to turn them adrift again. If these houses are badly conducted—and many of them, unfortunately, are—the indorsements are now made against the licensee, and all the landlord,—whoever he may be, brewer or wine-merchant,—has to do is simply to take measures to turn him out of the house, and obtain a fresh tenant. A fresh tenant comes in with a clean certificate—with nothing whatever against him—and he is enabled to carry on the house in the same badly-conducted style, till it becomes a perfect nuisance to the neighbourhood. That is the kind of house which requires to be dealt with, and if this Bill achieves no other object than simply getting rid of low publichouses propped up by the present Act, then I say it will have had an excellent effect, and will to a large

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extent carry out the present wishes of the temperance party. But another question is this: Is reform demanded, not merely by temperance reformers, who are animated, I believe, unquestionably by philanthropic and good motives, but by the better class of publicans, and especially by the public of New Zealand? Well, I maintain that reform is demanded. Reform is demanded by the public, and by the better class of publicans whom we wish to maintain as long as the traffic is to be retained; and it is necessary for their preservation there should be reform. What do we find going on at the present time? We find men who have a great amount of self-respect, the best of our landlords, so disgusted with the conditions under which they carry on operations that they are only too glad to sell out. Then, we find good houses, which were worth a considerable amount of money a few years ago, under the present system greatly deteriorated in value; and we also find people who are travelling about the country continually complaining that they do not now receive the same amount of accommodation and attention they received a few years ago, before the present pernicious licensing system was called into operation. I am not going to detain the House very much longer. I can only say that under our present licensing-laws the trade has been degraded; the publicans have been enslaved. Hotels are to be found on every hand for sale at low prices which were of considerable value a short time ago. Honourable and sensible men will not invest in this sort of enterprise, and the better class of landlords are quitting their hotels in disgust. We find, on the other hand, a general complaint on the part of the public that they cannot get the accommodation in these houses which they got a few years ago. I have heard it repeated and reiterated over and over again that when the Resident Magistrate and one or two Justices had to deal with these licenses the condition of things was far more satisfactory than it is at the present time. Why, our so-called local option, as introduced in the Licensing Act now in existence, is a mockery and a sham. It has placed these houses under the heel of a small minority of the population, and the houses are not conducted as they should be, and are nothing like what they were a few years ago in New Zealand. I say, if this Bill will have the effect of restoring to us something like the state of affairs that prevailed before the present Act was called into operation, it will have a most beneficial effect on the community. I do not expect that the prohibitionists are going to prevail; I do not expect that the temperance party will prevail; but, if we are to have any reform, let us have, at any rate, decent houses, let us have the trade elevated, and brought into something like the condition that existed a few years ago—a condition that was entirely different from the condition of things at the present time. It is only since the present Licensing Act was brought into force that we find a general clamour on the part of every

community that there shall be reform. The Government having had their hands forced by the honourable member for Inangahua—and I thank him myself, personally, for the step he has taken in pushing forward his Local Veto Bill—I say they deserve the thanks of the community, even at this late period of the session, for introducing a Bill which, I believe, —and it is admitted by the temperance party themselves,—will have the effect of settling this question for a few years to come, at all events. I notice that a recent largely-attended meeting of the temperance party in Christchurch has protested against the Bill, and asked that this sort of legislation should be held over until after the general election. I look upon that as intimidation. Are members of this House to be subjected to the threat of block-votes when they come before their constituents? They have a right to be emancipated and relieved from anything of the kind, and if this Bill will anticipate action of the kind it will have a most beneficial effect on our politics. Honourable members are not selected to come here and carry out the views of a section of the community; we come here to represent the majority of the people; and I believe the majority of the people is composed of the middle party, the party that believes in moderation, a party that is not to be dictated to as to what it shall eat or drink, but that believes in a certain amount of human freedom. I say the Ministry deserve thanks for introducing this Bill, because I think they have solved the question as far as it can be solved at the present time. I intend to support the third reading of the Bill, and I hope it will be carried into law.

Mr. FERGUS.—Sir, it is curious how circumstances alter cases. We heard the honourable gentleman who has just sat down say that the temperance party agreed with the Bill, and in the very next breath say that, at a meeting held in Christchurch, the temperance people had endeavoured to intimidate honourable members. It was intimidation with the honourable gentleman then, but I venture to say that if that meeting in Christchurch expressed views in accord with his own he would have said it was the voice of the people, to which we ought to bow down—the intelligent voice of the people which would be heard at the next elections. This is the sort of “bluff” we have been treated to. The position I take up on this Bill is this: I think it was unwise of the Government to bring it on just now at all. It is involved in a measure which is before another branch of the Legislature, and receiving its consideration—that is to say, the Electoral Bill. The voting under this measure as we have it now, if that Bill does not pass, will be confined entirely to the male electors of the colony. If the Electoral Bill passes in the other Chamber women will then have to be put on the electoral roll, and the constitution of licensing bodies will be entirely altered. Sir, I think it would have been wiser to have excluded the women from the vote on this occasion altogether until we had seen how

the granting of the female franchise operates in the selection of the House to be elected before long. But I object to this measure on totally different grounds from any mentioned by the preceding speakers. I object to it on totally different grounds from those mentioned by the honourable member for Inangahua, and on different grounds from those mentioned by the leader of the Opposition. I say that, so far as the operation of the measure in the country districts is concerned, you are absolutely and irretrievably taking away all control whatever over the liquor question. We have on the rolls of the colony now one hundred and eighty three thousand and some odd hundreds of voters, and if we augment that number by the passing of a measure which I believe will be passed in another place without the slightest alteration in any form—

Mr. FISH.—You are in their confidence?

Mr. FERGUS.—If the honourable gentleman will go to the other House, and hear the speeches made, he will come to the same conclusion that I have come to,—that is, the confidence in which I am. I say we are going to have three hundred and sixty thousand voters in the colony. Now, I take it that all interested, both on the side of the liquor traffic and on the side of temperance, will see that every individual capable of being put on the roll shall be put on the roll before the next general election; and they will also have the privilege of voting on this question as to the increase or decrease in the number of licenses or the absolute prohibition of any further license in their district. Now, I venture to say that not in a single purely country constituency in the colony shall we find the requisite number of people coming up to vote provided by the subsection in clause 15 of the Bill. It would be utterly impossible to bring up half the number of people on the roll to the polls. As I said the other night in Committee, there is not a single man sitting in the House just now who represents half of the electors in his district—not one. I have the returns here, and I find that there is not a man in this House who represents half of the male electors on the roll at the last general election.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Not the honourable member for Wakatipu?

Mr. FERGUS.—Well, he represents the lot, because he had no opposition. The member for Wakatipu has been so fortunate as to have had a walk-over at two or three elections, and consequently he has the unanimous confidence of the electors. But the objection I took to the Electoral Bill of last year—and it was an objection embodied in the amendment of the Council—obtains with regard to this Bill now before the House. You cannot, in a large and sparsely-settled district, such as I have the honour to represent, bring up one-fifth of the females to the poll, either for an election of a member of this House or for the election of a Licensing Committee. If you double the electorate by giving the women the franchise, and, as a necessary corollary, give them the right also to vote for Licensing Com-

mittees, it will absolutely amount to this: that the small amount of local control people now have will be entirely swept away, and they will have no power to increase, or to decrease, or to do away with the licenses in a district at all. Now, that is a retrograde step. I am free to admit that the districts, as they are at the present time, are, as stated by the honourable member for Masterton, far too small. They are ridiculously small; but in some cases they require to be made small in order to give sufficient local control. But this measure, which was to put the liquor traffic under more complete control, and to give the fullest trust to the people, is absolutely taking away that trust from the people altogether—they will not be able to exercise it.

Mr. FISH.—Do they now?

Mr. FERGUS.—I do not say they do now. I object to both. We expected the Premier would be good enough to fulfil the promise he made to the House before he brought down the measure, and satisfy all parties. That, Sir, is what he undertook to do, and he has miserably failed, though, probably, he had the best intentions in the world. But I go further. I object altogether to the expense which is going to be entailed upon the local bodies by carrying this measure. Every general election at present costs from £10,000 to £15,000, and we are going to put that expense on the shoulders of the local bodies; and probably it will be more, for, if we double the size of the rolls, we shall need more polling-booths. I know, if I were a member of the forthcoming Parliament, I should insist upon many more polling-booths being opened in the country districts—that is, provided the women are given votes and it is desired that they should exercise them intelligently. But we will suppose for a moment that they do get a Committee elected: then the Committees will be elected in these country districts principally from the small centres of population. Take my own district, for example, or that of the honourable member for Kumara, in whose district there are some seventy hotels scattered over a very large area of country; and I say, suppose Committees are elected, they will be elected from the small towns, and, necessarily, seeing that the revenue accrues to the local body within whose bounds the license is granted, it will be to the interest of the small towns, if they cut down licenses, to cut them down in the outlying districts, where, I suppose, the licensed houses are of much more service than they could be in the small towns themselves. Sir, I have no sympathy with the extreme temperance party. I am not a prohibitionist and have no sympathy with prohibitionists; nor, on the other hand, have I any sympathy with those who are under the control of the licensing interests. I think both are wrong, and I think that in trying to avoid one evil they have gone to another. In trying to avoid Seylla they are likely to be engulfed in Charybdis. I am pretty certain that the moderate liquor-party—the respectable hotelkeepers of the colony—would

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do well to set their faces against the passage of this measure; and for this reason: If the Act is found to be inoperative, then there will be a cry raised throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand which will compel the incoming Parliament to bring in a new measure, and the result will be that people who keep hotels will find that much more drastic and far-reaching reforms will be insisted upon by the newly elected. Sir, I think the liquor traffic should be more under control than it is at the present time. I do not believe that the present Act is by any means perfect, but until some well-considered and more beneficial legislation is passed it would be well on the part of this House to content itself with amending clause 9 of the existing Act, which would rule the Sydenham case and allow the people at the forthcoming elections to express an opinion on this great social question. I think the Government would do well even now to postpone the third reading of this measure until such time as we see the result of the Electoral Bill in another Chamber, and then I think it would be wise to relegate the whole question, after the electorates have been so extended, to the constituencies, and, after mature consideration, reflection, and investigation in the recess, to bring down such a measure as would to some extent fulfil the promise of the Premier that he would bring down a measure that would satisfy both sides. I shall be compelled, however much I may regret it, to follow the honourable member for Inangahua into the lobby in favour of reading the Bill a third time this day six months.

Mr. FISH.—Sir, it would be very difficult indeed, I think, to ascertain from the very wise remarks we have just listened to from the honourable member for Wakatipu what his views on the licensing question really are. He has gone all round the compass, gone through the middle, and ended nowhere. His contribution to this important question is neither one thing nor another; as we have heard the saying, it is "neither fish, flesh, nor good red-herring." I, for one, regret that the honourable member, in the closing days of his political existence, should rise in his place in the House and make such a sorry exhibition of himself with regard to this important matter as the honourable gentleman has just done. Still, I am not surprised at his speech, because, from a very extensive acquaintance with the honourable gentleman, I have learned to rely very little upon him. He is one day here, the next day somewhere else, and the third day he is off at a tangent. Therefore what he has said this afternoon with regard to what he intends to do respecting this Bill does not surprise me one little bit. I am only sorry that the honourable gentleman should, at the close of his political existence, have committed himself to such an extraordinary combination of odds and ends of notions as he has just favoured this legislative Chamber with. The position he takes up is that this is not the time to bring this legislation in. If this is not the time to bring in legislation of this kind, when, may

I ask, is that time? When will it come? When are we to say, "The time has arrived"? And the honourable gentleman forgets that this question was not brought in by the Government. The inception of legislation upon it was not the act of the Government, but the question was forced upon the House by the honourable member for Inangahua, and the Government had either to accept the extreme views of that honourable gentleman or bring forward a Bill which in their judgment would deal more fairly and justly to both parties. And yet my honourable friend says the time is inopportune. I wonder what my honourable friend would have done if the Local Veto Bill or the Liquor Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua had been passed on the floor of this House.

Mr. FERGUS.—Voted against them.

Mr. FISH.—I doubt, myself, what the honourable gentleman would have done. You cannot tell. From what he has told us to-day, I should not be at all surprised to see him voting for both or either of the measures referred to, and not voting against them. This matter has been forced upon the House and country, and through no volition on the part of the Ministry; the question is here because they could not help it. Then, forsooth, we are told that we must not proceed with this legislation because the Electoral Bill is in the other House, and that we ought to wait to see the fate of that Bill before we legislate in this direction: What does the honourable gentleman mean by such a statement as that? Are we to gather from that that if the women get the vote he will not vote for this Bill, but that if they do not get it he will? He gives no reason for such an extraordinary statement, but simply says, "Wait till the Electoral Bill is through the other House." Now, really, that Bill has nothing whatever to do with this question. If the Upper House decides by a majority—which I sincerely trust in the interests of the country it will not do—that women shall vote, then they have every right to vote upon this question. There is no valid reason why they should not vote on this as upon any other question. I do not know in what direction their vote will be given, but I believe that with the exception of a few hundred shriekers the women's vote will go in the direction of moderation and, above all, of justice. I cannot see the connection between the Electoral Bill in the Upper House and this Bill as affecting the question whether we should pass this Bill or not. Then, again, the honourable gentleman's objections are manifold, though there is nothing solid in any of them. He tells us that he objects to the Bill on different grounds from those given by the other gentlemen who have spoken against the third reading. He tells us that the Bill will take away all the power from the people in the country districts. Now, could any rubbish be greater than such stuff as that? How does this Bill take greater power away from these or any other districts than the Act under which the liquor traffic is administered at the present moment? Polls

have to be taken under that Act, and, if people would not come to the poll under this Bill, they do not come under the existing Act; and so that objection falls to the ground. And, besides that, if people in a large district such as the honourable gentleman represents would not come to the poll so as to secure that a majority of the votes in the district should be recorded, is that not absolute and undeniable proof that the people of that district are satisfied with things as they are? The honourable gentleman's reason for giving a vote against the third reading of the Bill in this respect is absolutely and utterly shallow, and, in my opinion, insincere. Then, he says he had expected the Premier to fulfil his promise and bring in a Licensing Bill that would please all parties. I would ask honourable members who heard the honourable gentleman speak on this question, what sort of Bill must it have been to have pleased the honourable gentleman? I venture to say that not only the Premier could not, but no other person in the community could have brought in a Bill which would have satisfied that honourable gentleman. Then, again, we were told that he objects to the large expense which will be thrown upon the local bodies if this Bill passes. Surely, the honourable gentleman forgets the statement made by the Premier that, if it is found that the expense is greatly in excess of what the local bodies have to bear at present, he will provide for that next year on the estimates, and take other steps to minimise the expenses so that they shall not exceed, or shall only very slightly exceed, what the local bodies have to bear at the present time. He told us, with a flourish of trumpets at the end of his oration, "I have no sympathy with the prohibition party, nor with the liquor party." In the name of fortune, I ask, with whom and with what has he any sympathy? I venture to say that outside the circle of his own person he has very little indeed. That is where his sympathy begins and ends. I have had considerable difficulty in making up my mind how I should vote upon the third reading of this Bill, and for this reason: that it does not go far enough in a liberal direction to meet my views with regard to what I think is justice to the liquor trade. I do not think myself that the interests of that large trade should be imperilled by any three-fifths majority taken at a poll: in point of fact, I do not believe that the wishes even of a minority of the people should be controlled by a majority. I do not recognise, and will not admit, the right of even a majority to say to me that I shall not be able to buy a glass of liquor if I want it. There are in other respects clauses of the Bill which, to my mind, are illiberal to the liquor and brewing interests; but, on the other hand, there are some advantages conferred upon the trade which they do not possess at present. Then, again, looking to the other side of the question, distinctly the Bill provides for the temperance party benefits from their point of view which they have never received before. And, in deciding as to how I

should vote on the third reading of the Bill, I have balanced the two things together and have come to this conclusion: that on the one hand it gives to the temperance party a portion of that which they want, and it gives to the liquor party a little more security than they have at the present time; and, although I do not agree with the Bill from the point of view from which I argue, I say I will accept this as the best compromise I can get from the Government in the meantime. That is the position I take up, and it would distress me very little indeed, and it would distress very little the party whose champion honourable members, and particularly the honourable member for Inangahua, delight to say I am. Of course, when he says that, it is simply for a purpose. I am the champion of no liquor party. I am the champion, if anything, of honesty, and justice, and fair dealing between man and man; and the continual attempts which have been made to destroy vested interests, simply because they are liquor interests, are degrading to our common humanity. Now, let us see what benefits both sides receive from this Bill that they do not at present possess. In the first place, the temperance party have got by this Bill that which they have been hunting for, if I rightly understand their wishes, for a long time—that is, extended districts, and an electoral roll instead of the ratepayers' roll. I have always argued that the ratepayers' roll was a most unfair one for their purpose, inasmuch as the interest of the ratepayers is not in the direction of preventing any reduction of licenses, because such reduction will involve an increase of rates. Now, they have got that, and I say if they are honest in their profession and intention, and sincere in the protestations they have made from time to time in favour of an enlargement of the districts, they should hail this measure as a concession. This Bill also does another thing which the temperance party has been clamouring for for years—it does practically give the power of veto to the people. They say, Trust the people. I say, distinctly, that this Bill confers upon the people the power, if they are with the temperance party, within six months of the present day to say that there shall not be another publichouse in the whole of New Zealand. What more do they want than that if they are honest people? Do they want spoliation, robbery, and confiscation? If you asked them that, as applied to anything other than the liquor traffic, they would repudiate it with scorn. But what do they want more, having the power to do all the things I have just spoken of? Have they not said, over and over again, "Give us the veto, and we want nothing else; we have got a majority of the people with us; only give us the power to say at the polls that the drink traffic shall cease"? I say this Bill does give them the power of veto, and yet they are not satisfied. And why are they not satisfied? They know that the majority of the people are not with them. They know the majority of the people of this colony, if polled to-morrow, will

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not vote for the total suppression of the sale of drink. And yet that party, with the greatest dishonesty—for it is absolute dishonesty—seek to attain their end not by means of a majority, but by actually a minority of the electors of the colony. Why, if they were sincere, if they were confident of their strength, would they object to the decision of a majority, as given under this Bill, of those on the roll? Certainly not. Let me ask this question: Would it be fitting, would it be wise, or just, or proper, to extinguish the whole liquor traffic in the colony unless you got an absolute majority of the people who were qualified and had a right to vote? I say, distinctly not. We are told that under this Bill no poll will be held—that is to say, that it will be impossible to get so large a number of electors to vote as will comprise a majority of those on the roll. It is silly to talk like that; it is absolute folly, and I will say why. It is said that the liquor party will refrain from bringing their friends to the poll, that they will induce them to abstain from voting, so that there will not be a majority of the electors voting, and therefore there will be no poll. Just consider for a moment, and call in the aid of common-sense and reason. Will they not at once see that it would be a fearful risk that the brewing interests would run if they prevented their friends going to the poll? I say, in the face of that, they would never dare to attempt it. I venture to say we shall very soon, if this Bill passes, be able to test the correctness of my words. I venture to say that not in one of the large centres of population in the colony will there be a void poll. What other boon do the temperance party get under this Bill? Do they not get the boon of being able to reduce the number of licenses? And if they were really sincere temperance reformers they would gradually reform, with the view ultimately of obliterating the traffic which they think so pernicious. If they were reasonable, would they not rather have a reduction in the traffic than try by improper means to totally extinguish the traffic at once? If they were honest and sincere they would jump at the power given them under this Bill, which insures to them, under certain conditions, a great reduction in the number of licenses. But no; that does not suit them; they must have the whole loaf or nothing; and I venture to say this: that, in seeking the impossible, they run a large chance of losing that which is within the bounds of possibility and probability. Can it be said truly that those who advocate, and sincerely advocate, a great reform—I care not of what character it is—can it be truly said that they are sincere while they refuse to accept a fraction of reform unless they get the whole of what they desire? What does this Bill give them the power to do in this respect? I say it is extremely perilous to the liquor trade. Not only have they got the power to say, in answer to one question, that there shall be a reduction of licenses, but if the votes of those who poll for prohibition and those who poll for a reduction—if the votes of those two added together make a majority of the votes

polled, then a reduction in the licenses will take place. We shall find in the large cities that a majority will vote for a reduction of the licenses, and we shall see that which all moderate men—myself amongst the number—have wished to see for many years past, and which we have been prevented from getting by the extreme action of the prohibitionists: we shall see a reduction of the licenses in the large cities. I consider that these things I have mentioned are amongst the boons given to the temperance party—boons which I venture to say, unless they accept at the present time, they run the risk of not getting for years. They may say that the elections are going to have a great influence upon the future. Putting on one side the women's vote, upon which these weaklings rely so much—putting that on one side, I venture to tell them this: If we went to the country on total prohibition *versus* moderation the poll would be about three to ten; and, if it is to be a test question, there is no one in this Chamber who would more gladly hail it at the next election than I. I shall hail with the greatest delight a test question of total prohibition *versus* moderation. Let us have a fair fight for it, and I venture to say that these gentlemen who desire spoliation, confiscation, and robbery of their fellow-men will go where they ought to go—to the wall, and their names will be known no more in parliamentary history. I should look with delight at the prospect of a fight on those lines. Whether this Bill is passed or not, the intemperate temperance party will not be satisfied; they will raise the question at the next election: and let them do it, and the Lord have mercy on them. Let them try it, Sir. And now, what are the gains offered to the trade by this Bill? The gains of the trade are, first, security of tenure for three years: that is to say, if it is decided at the poll in this way, then the man who conducts his house properly has the certain knowledge that so long as he does so he will have security of tenure at any rate for three years. Is there anything wrong, is there anything unjust, in that, or is there anything cruel in that?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes.

Mr. FISH.—“Yes,” my honourable friend says. I wish the honourable members who talk so glibly in this direction had a few hundreds or a few thousands of their own to lose. But the fact of the matter is that they have not got a shilling to jingle on a tombstone, and, that being the case, they are utterly careless of other men's property, other men's money, and other men's wealth, gained by honest industry, and who are as honest and sincere as they are. Yet the property of other people is to be shattered at a blow, simply because these sapient temperance reformers say, “We will it.” Why, Sir, there is no honourable gentleman, no man who has got a stake in the country or anything at all to lose, but wants to see some security for the rights of property; and yet they would vote for such a proposition as this without a blush of shame coming to their cheek.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—We always pay twenty shillings in the pound, at any rate.

Mr. FISH.—It does not matter what the honourable gentleman says, because he generally is guilty of some impropriety of speech, and it is far better that the House should not hear his remarks. I say, then, the trade has the security that there will not be a wholesale destruction of their interests in the event of a Committee being elected who have strong temperance opinions, because, if a Committee of that kind are elected now, they are restrained by law from going beyond a certain point. That is to say, they cannot reduce the licenses during their period of election by a greater number than 25 per cent. of the whole. That is another gain to the trade. The gain is a slight one, I admit, but still it is a gain. The gains that the trade has got as against the great gain that the temperance party has got ought, I say, to cause the temperance party to hail this measure with the greatest delight. As far as I am concerned, I cannot say, looking at the matter from a hotelkeeper's point of view, that it matters very much to them whether the Bill passes or not. In one respect it is a little improvement on what they have got at present; but they lose more than what they get, and what they lose is gained by the temperance party. And I say, without fear of contradiction, that, in dealing with the matter at all, if I were with them, and could possibly recognise the rights of the so-called temperance party, I should say, "Give us this amount and we will try to get more by-and-by," and I certainly should be glad to take what is given by this Bill. Then, there is another thing. If the temperance party really desire reform and not annihilation of the liquor trade, they will be pleased to see the clause in the Bill that makes the house liable for the conduct of the licensee. By means of this clause the interest of the landlord is brought into play as well as that of the licensee, and the result of the clause will be that the owners of property will in the future see that the men they put into their houses are men of good repute, who are likely to carry out the law, and to conduct the business respectably. Is not this a gain in the interests of propriety and morality from the point of view of temperance? Surely it must be conceded that it is; and I, for one, ranging myself as a moderate, am glad to see that this clause is in the Bill. Yes, Sir; because, in common with other people, I desire to see the trade elevated, but not annihilated. Then, again, why should there be an attempt made at this late period to deal in a different way with this Bill from the way in which we deal with other Bills when they come up for their third reading? It has been fought inch by inch, and debated *ad nauseam* in Committee. That being so, and the apparent mind of the House having been obtained on the matter, why should there be an attempt made at this late period to have the Bill thrown out altogether? Why, if those honourable gentlemen were in a sufficient majority to do this, I say, then, they ought to have gone against the second reading of the Bill when it was before the House. Now, however, after

having allowed the second reading to pass, after having allowed the Bill to get into Committee, and after having allowed an exhaustive debate to take place upon it, and when the Bill has safely emerged from Committee, they turn round and say, "We will have another fling at this Bill, and we will throw it out." What those honourable gentlemen who are supporters of the Government can think of themselves in voting against this measure, I do not know. I well recollect that, at the time when I thought fit to fight the honourable gentlemen on those benches, some very hard things were said to me for so doing. But I did what was the proper thing to do under the circumstances—I left the party at once; but I have never voted against the principles that I advocated on the hustings when I was elected. I did not stay in the Ministerial ranks, and from day to day nag and nag and nag at them. I boldly said I would go over to the other side of the House, and endeavour to form what in future would become a great Liberal party. Well, that party has not prospered to the extent I anticipated, but, still, I think the time will come ultimately when it will not be left to one person to maintain the reputation of the party.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Where will it be in the next election?

Mr. FISH.—"Where will that party be in the next election?" It will be all right, as you will find. Now, it is very unfortunate that the throat of the honourable member for Inangahua should be affected to-day. Well, Sir, I did hear some time ago, when I was unfortunate enough to come to the House with a bad throat, some honourable members say, "We are not sorry; we are tired of so much talking"; and I venture to say, in regard to the honourable member for Inangahua, that, if the fact of his having a bad throat to-day, which would interfere with his speaking, has prevented our receiving from him the very long oration which we otherwise should have had, we must be thankful. The honourable gentleman did not to-day, I am bound to say, evolve the obstructive tactics that he did in Committee on the Bill. I have been very unjustly charged from time to time with obstruction, so that I must say this: that during my nine years of parliamentary experience I never saw obstruction of such a determined character as took place in Committee on this Bill; I am bound also to say that I never saw obstruction of so utterly senseless a character. And what did we find, Sir? We found the Ministerial morning journal the next day lauding up the honourable gentleman for the bold and manly and vigorous stand that gentleman had made in defending a great principle. We found that newspaper eulogizing and praising up the honourable gentleman in this fulsome and adulatory manner. I venture to say this: that had myself or any other humble member of the House ventured to obstruct its business in the shameless way in which the honourable gentleman did obstruct this Bill in Committee it would have been heralded all over the colony, from

the Press gallery and by the Press minions, that there was obstruction of the most disgraceful character by Mr. So-and-so. But not so with the honourable member for Inangahua. When I saw this fulsome notice in the *New Zealand Times* I was amazed. I said, "Surely it cannot be that the Ministerial journal has sacrificed all that is fair and just, and has given up all right dealing, except for some very powerful reason." I therefore sought about for this reason, and I looked over the share-list of the company, and I there found the reason for their bowing down to the prophets of Baal in this way. I found that the name of the honourable gentleman was down for one thousand shares in this unfortunate company. As in all probability the proprietors and the staff, very shrewdly, knew that the unfortunate gentleman will lose every shilling of his money, they said to themselves the least thing they could do was to give him a little praise when they got the opportunity, although it was for doing a very improper thing. I do not grudge the honourable gentleman the flattery that has been bestowed upon him, for the country will recognise what he did on this occasion, and the country will say with one loud voice that obstruction of the most reprehensible character was indulged in by the honourable gentleman on that occasion. Fancy a member of this House, with majorities of fifty-three to ten and fifty to fourteen against him, from time to time causing the division-bells to be rung, and weary members to troop across the floor of the House to give their votes for that in respect of which he knew before he called for the division there must be an assured majority against him! Such trifling with the dignity of Parliament I have never seen. And the honourable gentleman will be judged not so much by the fact that he was obstructive to the last degree as by the fact of the positions he has occupied in this colony. He will be judged by what is expected of him, and he will be judged also from the presumptuous position he takes up in this Assembly on every occasion. The honourable gentleman again to-day assumed a sublime height of superiority to the opinion of the House, and more than one sneer was levelled at those whom he on every occasion designates as obstructive to the proper business of Parliament. As the *New Zealand Times* has given the honourable gentleman great praise for what he did, I suppose they must be right, and that we must be wrong. The honourable gentleman said, "What is this Bill? It is conceived in the interests of the trade." Now, I think I have stated sufficient to-night to show that this Bill is not conceived in the interests of the trade. Whilst it is a little better—and I admit that it is a little better, but only a little—than the present law, yet it is far less better for them than for the temperance people, whose champion the honourable gentleman professes to be. Then, he has heard that the possible passage of this Bill has already raised the value of hotel property. If that be so I am delighted to hear it, and so ought every member of the House to be

delighted to hear that any legislation that is passed has had the effect of increasing the value of property that hitherto, owing to the rabid attempts made by the extreme section of prohibitionists, had become reduced in value far and far below the real worth of the property. It is a cheering thing, indeed, and says volumes for the Government, if the honourable gentleman's statement made to-day is a correct one. Then, he says he cannot understand how so many members of this House pledged to local option can vote for the third reading of this Bill. I venture to say, in the first place, that there is a considerable minority of members in this House who are not pledged to local option at all, and I ask the honourable gentleman to show—which he has utterly failed to do—how they would be acting inconsistently by voting for the third reading of this Bill. Why, they had local option before, they have local option now; and here they have the power of the veto—the thing they have been asking for for years. So how any honourable member can be called inconsistent for voting in favour of this Bill I cannot understand. The honourable gentleman, in his most tragic and serious style, with a tremor in his voice, said, "I ask the members to pause before they pass the third reading of this Bill. Let them put it to the constituencies; let it go before the people; let them vote on this important change." Again, he said, "I ask this House to pause before reading this Bill." Sir, how often have I made an appeal to honourable members like himself—the same appeal with regard to the woman's franchise!—and how was my appeal answered by those honourable members who were in favour of that measure? They would listen to no request that the question of the woman's franchise should be referred to the constituencies before it was brought into operation; and surely there is no member in this House but will admit that the admission of women to the franchise is a far more important step, and may be far more serious and far-reaching in its effects, than this question of the liquor traffic. But I could get no concession. Is it not proof of the real inconsistency that always clings to persons who are extreme in their views?—but more particularly is this conspicuous with those who have extreme views with regard to the liquor question. I number among my friends and supporters in Dunedin a considerable number of men who are, from conviction, abstainers from the use of intoxicants, and I shall get their votes at the next election. I have not the slightest doubt, and I tell the honourable member for Inangahua, and those who hang upon the tails of his skirt, that it is only a very considerable minority of the temperance party that believe in the extreme views he has put before this House; and the views of the temperance people of New Zealand are not in accordance with those of that honourable gentleman. I say, distinctly, the temperance people, as a whole, are not with the honourable gentleman; and nothing can more plainly show that fact than what took

place in our Parliamentary Union in Dunedin a few days ago when the question of this Bill was brought up, debated, and discussed, and a vote was taken on it. The vote of almost every man of what we might call the temperance party was taken on that occasion; and what was the result? A large minority voted in favour of this Bill; and that proves the truth of what I say—that the great mass of the temperance party are not with the extremists, as represented by the honourable member for Inangahua. The honourable gentleman asked, “What control does the Bill give to the people?” and he also said, “Is this House to go back on Liberalism?” Well, Sir, I have already shown that this Bill is giving a considerable amount of control to the people which they have not enjoyed, and that it goes a long way in the direction he wishes; and, if we and this House are to be told that we are going back on Liberalism when we legislate in the direction of protecting the people's property, the people's vested rights, and the people's interests—if this be going back on Liberalism, then, I say, the sooner this House becomes Conservative the better it will be for the Colony of New Zealand. I have already dealt with the statement that under this Bill the parties interested in the liquor traffic would not vote. I am sure the honourable gentleman is mistaken in that. The interests of the liquor trade would be so imperilled by the attempts that would be made to interfere with it that they would not dare to risk not recording their votes. The incentive of self-interest will compel them to poll as many votes as they can. In conclusion, I wish to say one or two words in regard to the position taken up by the leader of the Opposition. I agree with almost every word he said with regard to his ideas on the liquor traffic; but, if I understood him aright, he said he was going to vote against the third reading of the Bill: if so, I cannot understand what he means by giving utterance to the expressions he did. I understood him to say that he was opposed to coercive measures of this kind—that he was opposed to the attempt made to tyrannize over the licensed victuallers and the trade. To that extent I agree with him; but that is no reason why he should refuse to vote for the passing of this Bill. The honourable gentleman must know that he has got to accept the inevitable—that there is to be some change in the liquor laws—in the laws relating to the control of the liquor traffic; therefore, if he knows that, he can hardly hope that a Bill more favourable for the trade than the law on the statute-book will be passed; and if this Bill before the House serves to give to that trade any better security—no matter how little—than they at present hold, then, I say, with the greatest respect, that, if the honourable gentleman wishes to be consistent, he must vote for the third reading of this Bill. I am now making the same remarks I made to the Good Templars—it is folly to refuse to accept part of a loaf because you cannot get the whole, and this Bill does give some little better security to the hotelkeepers, and I think we

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should accept it on this ground, and also on the ground that it is a reform to some extent in the direction which the temperance party of this colony have been advocating. Before I sit down I desire once more to express my sincere admiration not only at the manner in which the Government have drafted this Bill, not only at the manner in which they have grappled with a most complicated question, not only at the desire that they have evidently shown to endeavour to please the moderate section of the community, but also at the masterful way in which the Premier has carried this Bill through Committee. I shall not be accused of flunkysm or toadyism when I say I never knew so difficult a question dealt with more happily or with greater skill than has been done in this case. In conclusion, I may say that I do not feel satisfied with the Bill; it is not what I should have liked to see; but, in order to remove this burning question as far as we can from the arena of politics in the next election, I am constrained to give my vote, though not with absolute ease, for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. DUTHIE.—In the few minutes which are now at my disposal—it being near the dinner adjournment—I should like to briefly explain the views I hold in connection with this matter. I earnestly desire to see a reduction made in the number of publichouses. I should like to see that number made not to exceed the requirements of the country. But I do not recognise that prohibition is possible in this generation. I regret exceedingly that people who desire temperance should lose the assistance of those who will go the length of insisting on prohibition. This Bill does not bring about all that could be desired, but it effects one reform in the licensing-law which I shall have much pleasure in supporting, and will presently refer to. The honourable gentleman who moved the amendment would not assist to get the majority of three-fifths I proposed in subsection (2) of clause 15. I desired to have some fair margin allowed, and, unable to get this otherwise, I felt compelled to vote for that clause which provides for a majority at the poll. I exceedingly regret this, as the operation of that clause will be that we shall not get houses closed under this Act, and I feel sure the Committees will be largely chosen in the interests of the liquor party. Therefore I am not at all satisfied with this Bill. But the honourable member for Inangahua and others would not render assistance to get a better basis, and upon them must rest the blame. I am going to vote for the third reading of the Bill, because I recognise that the principle of local option is much further advanced. On a previous occasion I expressed my views as to the indirect influence that this Bill will have on the good conduct of licensed houses. Public opinion will be brought to bear on the conduct of these houses through this triennial appeal to the electors; and that is a good principle in the Bill. I recognise also as important that there is a responsibility now thrown upon the ground landlord which will prevent the degra-

dation to which certain houses have sunk—"tied houses," held for the sole purpose of selling as much drink as they possibly can. Into some of these houses men with very little capital and often with less character are put. By the Bill as introduced by the Government, and more especially by the amendment of the honourable member for Heathcote, the indorsements in future are to be held against the house, not against the licensee; and it will become an absolute necessity for the ground landlord to see that he has a class of tenant that will conduct his house in a proper manner, otherwise his property is sacrificed. He is the man who hitherto has reaped the main profits, and is now made responsible. Under the present law, upon a couple of indorsements upon the license the tenant is turned out, and another man of the same class and character takes his place. But under this Bill the ground landlord will have to see that he gets a responsible and respectable man to conduct his house in accordance with the law and without this outrage to public opinion. Believing that much is gained in the cause of temperance under this Bill, and as I understand this is not to be a party question, I feel bound to support the Government in the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. TANNER.—The fact of our whole licensing system being under discussion in the Bill now before us for its third reading seems to me to make it a subject too large to be lightly disposed of, and I feel I shall be justified in touching upon a few salient points of the measure in a few very brief remarks. I recognise at once that, in dealing as we deal now with this licensing question, we touch what is a vast public convenience, and yet—paradoxical though it may appear—an institution which is the source of some, and the nursery of many other, of the social evils that permeate society in this colony. It has been placed under public control in the past only to a partial extent by the Licensing Act of 1881. I think that the twelve years' experience which the colony has had of that measure is sufficient to show that it has worked fairly well, and that at the present time, in spite of the stir that has been raised on the question during the present year, that statute only requires a moderate amount of amendment. It appears to me that several evils have displayed themselves under the present system; and one of them is undoubtedly the process of subdividing the licensing districts, which places it in the power of a few people to initiate a system of persecution which in certain localities almost amounts to social warfare. I deprecate that in the highest degree, and it is for that reason I voted for the abolition of the existing licensing districts. Another evil which has been developed, and for which, I take it, the Government are responsible,—I do not speak of this Government, but of every Government that has been in office since 1881,—is the notorious laxity with which the provisions of the Act of 1881 have been administered. Complaints have been so general that it is needless

to go into that matter now, and the fact is very well known. If we required absolute proof of this assertion it would be found in the statement made by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay—himself for years the Minister in charge of the Police Department—when he stated in the House that he knew that violations of the Act were being carried out in so unconcealed a manner—and the men who were paid by the State to see that the provisions of the Act were enforced were by no means held guiltless—that he was compelled to notify his officers on the West Coast that he would have to remove them from their positions if they did not enforce the provisions of the law more strictly. There could be no more telling argument than those words of the honourable gentleman I have referred to. Such a state of things could only cover our administration with discredit. And there is another element which ought to be considered. There has been during the last ten or a dozen years a distinct growth of public feeling in the colony in the direction of a higher and purer social life. There are a large number of our people who are not prohibitionists, men who are not even abstainers, who have done excellent work during the last decade, and who know that if the Licensing Act as it now stands had been properly administered the efforts of those who have been working in the interests of the industrial classes would have been greatly strengthened. They feel, and justly so, that what we have required has been firmness in administering the existing law more than a multiplicity of legal enactments. These men have been met with such a check in their efforts for social reform by the legal decision in the Sydenham case that it has been the means of throwing open before the public of the colony the entire licensing question. This incident has given them an opportunity to cry out against the faulty state of the law; and their clamour is strengthened by the feeling prevalent among the mass of the community that it is the duty of Parliament to give to the citizens the right of reducing the evil which in some licensing districts is well known to exist—the right of minimising the overgrown dimensions of the traffic; and, Sir, in that desire I sympathize with them most heartily. What appeared to me to be required, and what the House ought to have done, was to pass a short measure of, say, half a dozen clauses, which would give the unfettered control to the people—to the majority of the people who poll. And, Sir, to the mass of our citizens using this large electoral privilege we might, I think, at the poll, also submit the question of the increase of licenses; the question of the maintenance of the *status quo* in the districts; the question of the gradual and sensible decrease of licenses, extending over a number of years; and, at the same time, the power of total cancellation. If we also provided more suitable regulations under which licenses should be issued, and by which Sunday trading would be checked, and the sale of liquor to children stopped, we should attain a great degree of improvement.

Add to this a power to cancel licenses on failure to comply with regulations, and the removal of the legal disabilities which are now imposed, and I think we should have reached a position which would have been satisfactory to the entire people of the colony, with the exception, of course, of those few extremists on both sides who are not likely to be satisfied with any legislation, and whom it is our duty distinctly to ignore. If this had been done we could have awaited the result with calmness and confidence, for we ought to be conscious that in the great mass of the people of the colony there exists, as there always exists in any large body of people, a strong sense of justice and right. Teach our people the whole duty of citizenship and its concomitant responsibilities, and greater stability will be imparted to our institutions. I say that the representations which have been made before this House, to the effect that the inhabitants of the colony are thirsting to rob and despoil every one possessed of property in any form, is a gross calumny and libel on the people. What they require is local control of the liquor traffic, and it is not likely they will be satisfied with anything short of it. It is questionable whether they will attain it at the present time, but there will be other Parliaments when this is dissolved, and the question is certain to come before Parliament during the next session. The Premier, when he proposed this Bill, said it would satisfy all parties. The Bill has passed its second reading, has gone through Committee, and it is now before us for its third reading. I acknowledge that it contains some good points. It is undoubtedly a good point to abolish four hundred Licensing Committees—an undue number means a waste of energy; but it makes the districts far too large, and the objections which have been urged in connection with parliamentary representation apply with tenfold force in the present case. The manner in which licenses have been given a currency of three years gives them, I think, a too tangible form as property, and, to my mind, that contravenes the spirit of centuries of English legislation. I regard that as the most grave step this Parliament has yet sanctioned, for from the earliest times a license has been only a *twelvemonths'* permit to sell drink, granted or withheld at the discretion of the State. The stipulation that one-half the voters shall poll or the poll shall be void is, to my mind, a novel and a dangerous innovation, and nullifies any good the Bill might otherwise achieve. Those who urge that three-fifths of the electors should record their votes in a given direction must see that there is no limit of finality in it whatever. The question was an open question when we met, but it will be a still more debatable question when we part. It would be unfair to condemn any particular points in the Bill unless I mentioned those of which I heartily approve. The Bill does, to my mind, give the electors complete control of the licensing traffic in theory. But that control is hedged with so many embarrassing restrictions that I am inclined to look far less

favourably upon the measure. It is also provided that no increase of licenses shall take place unless there is a sensible increase to the population in any given district, and by this we are safeguarded against an inundation of additional licenses. Whilst speaking on the points which to me are objectionable, I must state that, though not a prohibitionist, though not even an abstainer, I am the most determined local optionist and advocate of popular government in every reasonable and politic form—a government through the people, by the people, and for the people; and it is the inclusion in this measure, in however imperfect a form, of that addition to our constitutional liberties, that gives me great room for hope, even though I find it buried in a great mass of dross. There will be other Parliaments after this, which will remove the disabilities which have been imposed upon the exercise of a public right. It is not to be supposed for one moment that when this Bill comes into operation the liquor traffic will be extinguished, as its advocates with their assumed panic would have us to believe. It would be impolitic, it would be inexpedient, it would be impossible, Sir, to extinguish the liquor traffic at a sweep; and, more than that, if by any possibility the liquor traffic could be extinguished in this colony to-day, before midnight to-morrow there would be a revulsion of feeling from one end of the colony to the other. It is recognised by every reasonable man that the stamping-out process, which is so lightly spoken of, may be safely relegated to another generation. But, by our efforts, the evils of the liquor traffic may be minimised, and we may hand down to our children a task of manageable proportions. I have spoken against the clauses which appeared to me to be inexpedient, and I have supported what I thought right, and now the Bill is before us for its final reading I feel I should not be justified in opposing any further resistance to it. The time will come when we, or our successors, will strike out from this Bill those mistakes which, to my mind, it contains; but they will preserve that splendid principle of local option that runs through it. For that reason I shall vote for the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Sir, it is my intention to speak for this Bill, and to vote against the amendment. I paid very great attention to the able speech of the honourable member for Inangahua, and I was very sorry that he was not in better trim, in order that we might have heard more fully from him upon this question. I paid very great attention to what the honourable gentleman did say, and, to my mind, he did not advance one single point in his argument against this Bill. He asked the Government why they did not drop this Bill and allow it to go to the next general election, and to be settled then. The honourable gentleman was followed in this strain by several other speakers. I say that the Government was forced to take up this question by that honourable gentleman, and those satellites who are hanging round his coat-tails. They are the people who rushed

Mr. Tanner

those other two Bills forward, and were very wild because the Government did not put off the financial debate to allow their Bills to be dealt with. The honourable gentlemen stated that this was the most important question that could be brought before the House. They went so far as to indicate that it ought to be given precedence before any other business was gone on with. Now, the honourable gentleman has not hesitated to tell the House that the temperance people themselves are not in favour of the Bill. Well, I am one of those practical men who always take practical and common-sense views of any questions that come before this House, and, in order to arrive at what the people think of the measures before Parliament, I always endeavour to send Bills that affect different people to them for their opinions. I sent the Agricultural Bill to the agricultural associations. I also took great care to send a copy of the Government Bill, and copies of the honourable gentleman's two Bills, to the people interested; and what is the result? Well, we find in the local papers of the district I have the honour to represent that this resolution was passed:—

"The Unity, I.O.R., on Tuesday evening passed the following resolution, with instructions that it should be forwarded to the Premier: 'That this meeting views with satisfaction the attempt now being made by the Government to deal with the liquor question, and urges upon the Premier to push forward to the utmost those parts of the Bill which will tend to give the control of the drink traffic into the hands of the electors.'"

Now, Sir, we have that, and also private letters from the leaders of the temperance movement—men that I know are an ornament to the organization. This is the private letter I got from one of them.

Mr. TANNER.—Will that letter be laid on the table afterwards?

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Yes, Sir; and I hope that the House will have it framed and hung up, for the information of the honourable gentleman. The letter is as follows:—

"New Plymouth, 23rd August, 1893.

"DEAR MR. SMITH,—Many thanks for sending me copy of the Liquor Sales Bill. I am glad the Government has had courage to face the question. To my mind, they are the right parties to do it, as they profess to be a Radical Government. The liquor question is decidedly a Radical measure—giving the people the power to control it. I hope they won't so hedge the question round with difficulties and side-issues that it will confuse the working-class voters. As far as I can see, it is a good Bill. I hope they will push it along and get it to become law as soon as possible. With kind regards, trusting you will give the Bill all the support possible,—Yours, &c.,

"THOS. BRASH."

That is what the temperance people say of this measure—those people who really advocate the temperance movement in a rational, fair, and equitable manner. Such being the

case, I shall do my best to support this measure and to carry out the wishes and desires of the moderate people in my district. These great temperance reformers, these extraordinary prohibitionists, of whom the honourable member for Inangahua is the great apostle—they are not satisfied. They are always trying to put party against party. They are not satisfied with moderation; but they have paid lecturers going round the colony, and they prate that they have been asked to stand for almost every constituency in the country, and that they were going to bring out prohibitionists for every constituency. I throw out the challenge, and I ask one of them to come to my district. Now, they talk about moderation, and all the time they send these paid temperance lecturers round; and these are men who do not take a moderate view of the question. I believe the Rev. Mr. Walker says he drafted the Bill brought in by the honourable member for Inangahua. He claims, Sir, to have done so. But, at any rate, he has been up in my district recently, and this is what he says:—

"They need have no apprehension, however, on that score, as the Direct Veto Bill did not do away with the provisions of the present Licensing Act, and what had been done under that Act would therefore hold good. He believed that if the temperance party did not carry their measure this year they would be able to put in a Parliament that would carry the Direct Veto Bill next session. They wanted all the electorates to arrange for a direct-veto candidate being nominated at the next elections. He then read an extract from a newspaper commenting on the speech made by Mr. E. M. Smith in opposition to the Direct Veto Bill, in which Mr. Smith said he was not going to be 'bamboozled' into voting for such a Bill. He (the speaker) hoped the people of New Plymouth would not be 'bamboozled' into voting for Mr. Smith."

Now, Sir, I have on a former occasion explained, and you all heard me explain, the position I took up. Did I not vote for the Direct Veto Bill? Of course I did; but the direct veto and prohibition are totally different things. Now, Sir, the Rev. Mr. Walker went on to Waitara, another important seaport town in my district, and then he, at the end of his meeting, asked the electors to support Mr. Chairman against me. This, I consider, was an insult to the intelligence of the electors.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I think the honourable gentleman is going rather far from the Bill.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—No, Sir; these men were going about the country advocating this measure—calling upon the Legislature to press these extreme measures. I am trying to show honourable gentlemen why we should be moderate, and not take any notice of these people. Why do they preach these views? Why are they going about the country trying to set aside the programme advocated by the Temperance Alliance? Their programme is total prohibition, without any compensation or consideration. They say they will never be

satisfied until they close every hotel in the colony. They say that the liquor is a curse to humanity, and ought only to be sold in the chemists' shops as a drug. That is their programme, and nothing short of it will they have. I think the opposite. They also say that before next general election they will bring out a candidate for every electorate, and they will not vote for any man who does not go so far. If those gentlemen were returned to this House, and the government of the country were put in the hands of men who go about making these wild statements—well, Sir, much as I love the country, I would pack up my swag: I and my good lady and twelve children with their progeny would leave the colony. I say that if one of those gentlemen goes up to my district and, on a public platform, makes that statement, I shall not condemn him. I will wait until I meet him in Wellington. I can keep this in my pocket and ask him whether this is a proper report, and what he did say. Every member here knows that I have always been in favour of the women's franchise—have voted for it on every occasion. I hope it will become law. This is one of the cardinal points—a great lever of this temperance movement. I am sure that, if this were given to these people, by a large majority they would settle that question as far as we are concerned—that is, if we attempted to bring it into this House again. Are we sent here to represent one class of the community? No, Sir. I say we are sent here to represent New Zealand as a whole, not any particular class; and when we find two forces contending together, then it is our duty, as members of this House and representatives of the people, to settle the thing. We are a Court of Conciliation, and ought to be the umpire between these two classes of people, and we ought to see that they get fair-play. We cannot do better than support this Bill. It is no use my trying to go over the same ground again. But these temperance advocates should recognise this fact: that you have to be a ratepayer before you can vote under the present system. That means that a man must be worth some property, be a property-owner, before he can be a ratepayer, unless he has a lease. Very well, that confines it actually to property. Under this Bill it does not matter whether you have any property or not, because an industrious man, a resident of the Colony of New Zealand, and living in a country that gives the greatest amount of political liberty of any country on God's earth, can vote: as long as a man is twenty-one years of age he has a right to vote for a member of Parliament, and this same right is now to give him the right of having a voice on the liquor-traffic question of this colony. This is a great advance given to those people who are prepared to face this question. Now, Sir, we find that these people want total prohibition, without compensation or consideration. Then, the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford) proposed only one simple amendment in the Bill, which would give the hotelkeepers time com-

pensation; but these honourable gentlemen voted against time compensation. They believe these houses should be closed, and closed to-day, if they could have their wish. I have given my views on the Bill as it went through the various stages, and I am not going to prolong this debate. I have only to say, further, Sir, that, whatever may take place, at the next general election those people who advocate this temperance programme and no other will find themselves still in the majority, as in the past, and will not advance their position.

An Hon. MEMBER.—In the minority.

Mr. E. M. SMITH.—Of course, I mean minority. Still, the facts of the case are these: It is a very great advance, and I am very sure it is the right thing to do, because, if the people consider that the drink traffic should be removed from the face of the earth, it is not too much to ask them to vote, and it is for them to say what shall be done. I have gone to a great amount of trouble to test the people. I have consulted the people on every occasion, and I am sure there is a majority in favour of moderation; they are satisfied with the Government Bill. There is a very large majority against the prohibition people. Still, there may be a large number of people who sympathize with the temperance people, and who are willing to meet them in a fair spirit. I say this: that the Government deserve the greatest credit; and I am sorry to know that when the third reading of this Bill takes place, and when the division on this Bill is called for, and the papers are taken up to the Speaker, we shall find out that men who are Government supporters, and who profess to be Liberals, have gone into the Opposition lobbies to swell the minority in favour of the amendment,—that they are going to turn round and vote against the third reading of the Bill. And for what? Because a few of those red-hot apostles of prohibition have been all over the country raising the people up—getting resolutions passed; and these men are frightened; they are afraid that they will not get the prohibition or the temperance vote at the next general election; so they are going to turn round, with a view to be able to say, "There, after I got your intimation from your public meeting, and knew that you wanted the settlement of this matter held over, I went against all my previous speeches and my previous declarations, and, after all I had done to amend the Bill, and after voting on clause after clause, I turned round and voted against the third reading of the Bill." Well, I hope when the division takes place we shall know how far these honourable gentlemen can be trusted in future on any other Bill. I have said all I intend to say on the question; but I have never flinched from what I have stated on the public platform. And it was unnecessary for me to make any pledges on this question, because I can claim that I was returned to this House on an independent ticket, because when any one asked me whom I was going to support, I said, "What is the use of asking that question? Wait till I go down and

Mr. E. M. Smith

find out who is going to support me and my measures." Now, I am not afraid of this question. I can go back and say this: I always said that my policy was, that the source of all power is the people, and what the majority of the people want they should have; but the majority must decide what they want by voting, and this Bill gives them that right. Then, again, I say this: I was returned to this House under the most peculiar circumstances. I never had a committee; I never had three men at one time connected with me; I came out on the broad Liberal public platform, and fought my own battle; and I shall go back and fight my battle again; and I am not afraid of any temperance orators, because I can say that I supported the Direct Veto Bill, giving the people the right to vote and settle the liquor traffic; and the Government Bill does that. All electors can vote, but only half on the roll are required to vote, and a majority of three-fifths to rule: so, take a district with one thousand on the roll, five hundred vote, and, if three-fifths of those vote in favour of closing all hotels, then they are closed. That proves that if the people desire to do so they can, by a small majority of those who vote, and a minority of the electors on the roll, close every hotel in the colony. And that is why I support this Bill, and the Government in their honest endeavour to pass a fair and honest measure to suit the majority of the people in this colony. And, Sir, I feel convinced the temperance people themselves, together with a large majority of the people of the colony, will, when they carefully analyse the Government Bill, be satisfied, as it gives them very great concessions. It is on those grounds I support the Bill, which I believe is fair all round.

Mr. WILLIS.—When the Government were asked to bring down a Licensing Bill that would give general satisfaction the Premier stated that he hoped to be able to do so; but that remark of his was met with derisive laughter from both sides of the House. The thing was thought to be impossible, in that there were so many interests at stake that it was deemed impossible that they could ever be reconciled. Well, the Premier brought down this Bill, and that derisive laughter was changed to applause, and, Sir, it was applause that resounded from all sides. And the first and foremost of those to compliment the Premier was the honourable member for Inangahua. He was then followed by a number of members, one and all saying that the Premier had accomplished a most difficult task, and had brought down a Bill that would be found to be satisfactory to the House. We must look at the difficulties the Premier had to contend with. There were three different parties to reconcile: first the prohibitionists,—as we all know, a most difficult class indeed to deal with; then the publicans; and then we had the clubs. Now, the clubs will be rather a difficulty, in my opinion, in the future, and there will be some clashing between the publicans and them. Therefore it required very great judgment in deciding what the legisla-

tion should be. Well, we find that, in the case of the publicans, they were given an additional security of three years for their licenses, which was conceded so that there might not be that feeling of insecurity which there has been in the past. Then we come to the clubs. We find there that, beyond the very necessary condition that was imposed, that supervision should be allowed over them, for the purpose of preventing any abuse of them in the way of excessive drinking or of gambling—beyond that the clubs are allowed pretty well their own way, and can keep open to what hours they may think fit, subject to being well conducted. Now we come to the prohibitionists. I consider that the Premier did very well indeed for them. He said, "You shall have, by a majority, the right to reduce the licenses, and to close them altogether by a majority of three-fifths." But the prohibitionists are not satisfied with that. Objection was taken by the honourable member for Inangahua, who said he was not satisfied with the condition that half the electors of a district must vote. Then afterwards we heard difficulties started in this way: that, supposing that in an electoral district a number of the electors were told not to vote, it would be impossible then to get the required half. I say that is utter nonsense. When we remember that those districts will number, probably,—if men and women are included,—some four thousand or five thousand electors, I say it would be a very hard job indeed to go round to large numbers of them and ask them not to vote. Suppose the publicans said, "It is against our interest to vote, and we ask you not to vote." I say the result would be that, if the publicans acted in such a way as that, with such a large body of electors, they would be found to be in the minority, and that the prohibitionists would get all the advantage, because the numbers would be too large to be so dealt with. I think that the Premier has accomplished a most difficult task, and the painstaking way in which, during the passage of the Bill through Committee, he endeavoured to provide for the clauses being safeguarded reflects very great credit on him. And when I hear so many members who were so ready to give praise to the measure when it was first brought down now say that they are not going to vote for the third reading of the Bill, I must say it causes me a very large amount of surprise. I think the Bill is one this House can safely support; and, considering the prohibitionists have been so well dealt with, they have small reason to complain. Like many other honourable members, during the confusion caused by the numerous divisions that took place in Committee I on one occasion went into the wrong lobby. I was not singular in that. Honourable members know that I advocated time compensation. My belief has been that, if publicans are called upon suddenly to close, they should, at any rate, get some extra time allowed them to make up their loss. I am not going into the question of that now; but what I would say is this: When the division took

place against giving three years, an amendment was proposed to the effect that it should be year by year, and I by mistake went into the wrong lobby and voted for the amendment. I thought it necessary to explain this, because it might look as if I had been very inconsistent, after supporting time compensation, in going into the lobby as I did. It was purely an accident. I need not detain the House any longer. I have given my views on the Bill, and I can only say that I trust honourable members will support the third reading, and, if errors are discovered afterwards, the law can be amended. Fresh legislation can be brought down next session, and perhaps a better Bill will result.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—Sir, I wish to say a word or two on this Bill. I should like to say, in reference to some of the remarks made by the honourable member for Inangahua, and the action of the temperance party, that I was one of those who were pledged to local option without compensation. While on this subject, I might say that the temperance people in Auckland knew perfectly well that for a great many years I refused to give up the idea of compensation, because I was strongly of the belief that some of the first-class houses, on which large sums of money had been spent, and which were a public convenience, ought to be compensated. However, I eventually said that, if a majority of the people could be found prepared to shut them up, I should be prepared to allow it to be done without compensation. I shall be able to prove, before I sit down, that I have not departed from that pledge in any way. But I am going to ask honourable members, and the leaders of the temperance party, who is our guide and leader in this matter in the House? I will not refer to the past session, when we had admitted prohibitionist lights in this House voting on both sides, against their own advantage, and to save their Government. I am not going back to that, but I will come to this session itself. I am not one of the prohibitionists; I do not attend their meetings; but I am prepared to give them a certain amount of support in the direction of controlling the liquor traffic for the better. There are too many publichouses, and a great many of those we have ought to be better kept; there should be more accommodation, and we should derive more benefit from them than we do. I think that is the truest course. At the beginning of the session the honourable member for Inangahua brought in a Direct Veto Bill that was, I believe, drawn up by the Executive of the United Alliance in the colony, and we had petitions from thirty or forty thousand petitioners laid on the table of the House in support of the Bill. We then, suddenly, had another Bill brought in—a Licensing Act Amendment Bill—by the same honourable gentleman, which was completely opposed to the first-mentioned Bill in many respects, having different sorts of districts, different rules in respect of licenses, and a few other things which were not in the first Bill. We then had a reverend gentleman named Walker

saying that we ought to support the Direct Veto Bill, and not the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. Well, I was prepared to give the Direct Veto Bill, under certain conditions, my support. I was not prepared to support this Licensing Act Amendment Bill, on account of the smallness of the districts; and several other unfair things were in it. I also thought—and, I think, rightly—that to a great extent the Standing Orders of this House have been got round for the purpose of giving that Bill a certain amount of preference, and I do not think that the Good Templar cause will stand unless it is carried on in a fair and legitimate manner, and in daylight, and before men, in a proper way. No catch-result can ever be of any good, if they cannot maintain it afterwards. We had, in addition to that, the promise of the Premier that, if progress was reported on the Licensing Bill, he would bring in a Bill to try to deal with the whole question. I supported that proposal, and I wanted to see the Premier's Bill, because I felt as certain as possible that the honourable member for Inangahua would find out before the session was over how parties stood in this House. He could never have passed either of his Bills in any shape or form without the Government support. The Government bring in a Bill, and it is carried to the third reading. We then have the opinion of the honourable member for Inangahua as given in an interview, which I should like to read. He is our "great leading star" in these matters. The report of this interview has not been contradicted, and I have no doubt it is correct, as it appears in the *Auckland Herald*, which is a very respectable newspaper. This is from the *Auckland Herald* of Friday, the 18th August, 1893:—

"As a whole, I am well pleased with the Bill, though, as I pointed out, it does not go the length I thought it would in section 15. I hope, however, the House will restore the bare majority, and, if it does that, the Bill will be a most distinct advantage on any existing law. I do not intend to move any amendments to the Bill except the few I have given notice of, in order that, so far as the temperance party is concerned, we may do our best to get the Bill put through the House. . . . I do not, therefore, wish to take up the time of the House, or interfere with the passage of the Government measure.

"I presume you will fight for your amendments?

"Certainly; I shall take a division on them, and that is all I can do."

We all know how the views enunciated in that conversation have been carried out in this House. I thought that was some guidance for us. We then have one of the leading lights in Auckland—Mr. French—writing a letter to the paper. And he approved of this Bill, subject to slight amendments, and said it was a distinct advantage. That great and shining light in temperance matters, the honourable member for Ashley,—who is, I suppose, next to the honourable member for Inangahua, the greatest authority we have in

Mr. Willis

this House on all such matters appertaining to goodness, or anything approaching goodness,—said it was an excellent Bill, and would have his support. I was very much moved by that honourable gentleman's remarks. I felt there must be something extra good in it, and I almost felt it was entirely in the interests of temperance. But there has been a sad falling-off in that honourable member. I advise him the next time not to stop until he receives telegrams to turn him. He first supported the Bill, and then, I believe, he received numerous telegrams which made him turn the other way. Then we come to the question, Are we delegates in this House, or do we come here to represent the colony? I may say I had a telegram from some of my constituents, and they said five hundred of my constituents had met and condemned me in wholesale language. There are not that many Good Templars in that part of the district, and, as five hundred people were present, I suppose the Good Templars were joined by some of my opponents, who took occasion to abuse me. I take up this position: that I do not follow directions sent in telegrams by a section of my constituents. I do not represent one part. I represent the whole of the constituency, and it is a very large and varied one, including all kinds of interests. In some places there are no publichouses at all; in others there are two or three well-conducted and useful ones; and in other places there are some which might be done away with: but I have to represent the whole of the district and the whole of the colony, and I think every member should do the same, so that we ought not to be too much influenced by outside opinions. And then, again, what guidance had we in Committee on the various points raised? We have the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), who has displayed in this matter at times a very strong prohibitionist feeling, and at other times a very generous feeling as regards fair-play. He has, however, dealt fairly with the Bill, a good many times voting away from his party. The whole matter comes down to this: The Bill as brought in provides for no compensation whatever. I opposed anything being put in it in that respect, so that, as far as the pledges of members are concerned—and I suppose every honourable member gave a pledge at last election—we have not gone in for any compensation whatever. In regard to the Bill itself, I will shortly mention some of the facts. We have electoral districts. Practically the honourable member for Inangahua adopted that in his Direct Veto Bill. We have the roll which is provided for the general election of the colony; we have provision for purifying that roll; and I may say that this is a distinct advance for the temperance party in the colony. We have these two great gains, and it seems to me that the only point in which we have not kept our pledges was in providing that there should be a three-fifths majority. I was perfectly prepared, and always have been, to support the bare majority of votes that are able to poll. As to this talk about

government by the people, through the people, and for the people, I say I recognise *the* people, and not a small section of it. I recognise that government "by the people" means that all of them are to have a vote; "through the people" I recognise that the majority of the people must give expression to their feelings; and if "for the people" it must be for the whole of them. If you imagine a bare majority of the votes of, say, a hundred and fifty people out of two thousand, do you mean to tell me that that would be government "by the people, through the people, and for the people"? It would be government for the few people who went to that particular poll, who were voting for the great mass that had no opportunity, probably, of voting. We must have a certainty that, whatever way it is carried, it will maintain itself. It will be worse than disastrous if we keep chopping and changing; and we have a resolution now in this Bill, and a very strong one, that, once local option is granted, before it can be altered again you must get a three-fifths majority, and an actual majority of votes on the roll must be polled; so that, if local option is once got, it will be just as hard to get rid of it as it is to get it now. The most important part is the reduction part, and that is by a bare majority of votes, supposing one-half of the votes are polled. If half of the votes are polled, one-quarter of the people, or one over that number, can bring in a reduction—an enactment which is a most valuable one, and which I should like to see carried through. I do say this: that in all the larger cities—I do not say so much about the country districts—there will be a poll. You may be quite certain that it is a serious matter for the publicans, and they will not sit down under the chance of losing the whole of the licenses for three years, and you will find that the poll will take place in all the large cities. As to the three-fifths majority, I may say, first of all, we were feeling our way to get an Act which would pass this House and probably the other Chamber, and I hardly think a bare majority would pass this time; but in the future it is quite possible that another House may approve of a bare majority. But I hope, whatever is done, nobody will be silly enough to say that with less than one-half the people the poll is to be carried. Supposing we had some important measure in this House—we know that the Standing Orders require that a certain number shall be present before anything can be done—supposing we had some important question before us, it would be an unwise thing to say that a national question should be decided upon the votes of less than half the number of members. On our Committees, too, a quorum is provided for; and this is just on the same principle. At first I thought it a great hardship, but while the Bill was being taken through Committee I felt convinced that, with the great advantage we now have of purifying the rolls by striking off those who do not vote, it would not be out of the way at all. I think a great many

of the Good Templars themselves must find that by-and-by, when they get used to the provisions, they will be able to work under it, and with advantage. When they get powerful, the other side will have to roll up to the poll; and, if the three-fifths majority provided in this Bill should prove unworkable, I have no doubt the House will alter it to one-half. Under this Bill I should not be surprised to see the publichouses reduced in every large city in this colony; and is that not worth fighting for? When I see the Good Templar people refusing a measure like this I do not know to what extent they want to go. The honourable member for Inangahua kept on using the words that he wanted the people to have control. It is evident the honourable member for Inangahua will not be satisfied unless you substitute for the word "control" the word "stifle," or the words "do away with." He wants the people to destroy the liquor traffic: that is the whole essence of the argument. He does not want the people to control, except in the sense of controlling the liquor traffic out of existence. That is the only control that will suit him, and that is where he is wrong, and where he does not fight fairly for the temperance interests. This Bill is a step in advance, as far as the temperance cause is concerned—a distinct step; and, according to the voice given in regard to Liberal measures, we ought not to try too much at once, but to proceed slowly. There is one thing in the Bill which I was very sorry to see struck out, and that was the inclusion of Bellamy's. I say this: that when we are legislating for the people we should legislate for ourselves. If we are going to place the clubs under disabilities, and make such restrictions with regard to the sale of liquor in publichouses, I say, as men, we ought to shut up Bellamy's entirely; and, if we do not, I say we are not true to ourselves, and we are not worthy of seats in this House. The honourable member for Inangahua said there were numbers of people who could not earn a living except by doing work in connection with hotels—serving behind the bars, and so forth. There are plenty of people, too, who can only earn a living by being temperance lecturers. They have tried everything else, and they have come down to that at last. I do not say that they are out of place, but I say every man finds a billet for himself. All the talk about interfering with the secrecy of the ballot is nonsense. It is just the same as at any election in the colony. A person may go and ask another man not to vote. It is exactly the same thing. It does not interfere with the secrecy of the ballot one way or the other, and the whole of the arguments of the honourable member for Inangahua fall to the ground. In an election I may ask a person, if he will not vote for me, not to go to the poll. I may have a person, so to speak, under my finger, but who is opposed to me, and I say to him, "Be cautious; do not vote." I would not do so; but, suppose I did, I could tell from my scrutineers, who ticketed the roll, if that

Mr. Buckland

person voted. The ballot will be always open to that argument. There is nothing in the argument whatever. I cannot for my life see why a lot of people who really and truly have not any strong feelings in the matter should be forced to rush to the polls. I really think, if this Bill is allowed to become law, it will be a very good basis for future amendment of the law, and that it will give effect to the wish of the majority of this House. There is one other subject I should like to say a word or two on, because I have given it a good deal of thought. I refer to the clause in regard to the continuance of licenses for three years. I should like to show, first of all, what is the present law. Section 78 of the Licensing Act says, "Every person shall, subject to objections as hereinbefore provided for, and to the discretionary power vested in every Licensing Committee by this Act, be entitled to obtain from the Licensing Committee a certificate authorising the renewal of his license." That is no stronger wording than the wording of this Bill. The words "entitled to" are practically the same as the provision in this Bill. There is no difference in law between the two. The present Act says that every person, provided he obeys the law, is entitled to his license, subject to the Committee deciding that the house is wanted in the district—subject to the discretion of the Committee. Now, the only difference between this clause and the clause in the present Act is the omission of the words "the discretionary power of the Committee." What takes the place of the discretionary power of the Committee? Have we not provided for that? We have left it to the people. The people have discretionary power, and I say that, if a poll takes place every time, there is no wrong whatever in that clause. Not only that, but the position is an absolute necessity: it is a consequential amendment of the law. You could not have anything else. How would it be leaving it to the people, if the people decided that there was to be no alteration and the Committee used their discretionary power? I cannot see that there is anything exceptional in that, except in one case. If there be no poll, if the poll failed, I could see that there would be a slight injustice worked; but it would be only to this extent: that it would stir the people up to go more strongly to the poll next time. But we must not suppose for one moment—at least, I do not suppose for one moment—that we are framing this Act for the purpose of doing away with the publichouses in the colony. I believe the honourable member for Inangahua's only idea of a prohibition Act is an Act which is absolutely, without any chance to the contrary, to do away with all the publichouses in the colony. I do not suppose for one moment that this Bill is going to do that. I suppose it is going to reduce them, and in some cases do away with them, and that it will certainly improve the others. I do not think that in any of the large cities a poll will fail where reductions could take place; and in most of the districts

where a poll could not be taken there are only one or two publichouses, so that it will be very difficult to reduce them, and probably the Licensing Committee would not carry out any reduction. Here is a tabulated return which I have made out in regard to the fearful waste of money that goes on. It is as follows: Under the head of liquor of all kinds we imported last year to the value of £273,439, paying duty to the extent of £404,728—a total expense in liquor of £678,162. Under the head of tobacco, cigars, pipes, *et cetera*, we imported to the value of £146,629, paying duty to the extent of £299,769—a total of £446,398. Under the head of tea, coffee, *et cetera*, we imported to the value of £181,849, paying £109,687 in duty—a total of £291,536. Tobacco and tea largely exceed liquor, so that, if we are only going in for economy in doing away with liquor, we ought to go in for doing away with tobacco and tea, and then there would be a very large saving to the colony. It is said that the districts are too large for the Committees. I think it is admitted that they are not too large for prohibition, and, if they are not too large for prohibition, I cannot see how they are too large for the Committees. The same districts will elect the members of this House. I think, myself, and always have thought, that it would be better if we had larger Committees, instead of small parish ones. In regard to the thirsting for spoliation, which the honourable member for Heathcote spoke of, I must say this: I do not for one moment suppose he is doing so, but I cannot help thinking there are a large number of people in the colony at the present moment who are thirsting for it. A great many of the most out-and-out prohibitionists are desirous of closing up every house at once, and without compensation; and I do not think, myself, it is an altogether wise proceeding. In regard to the general question of the control of the liquor traffic, I hold that there are only two ways in which it can be controlled. One is by election of Committees as under the present Act, and the other is by direct and popular vote. Our present system has not worked altogether well. The districts are too small, and, as the honourable gentleman says, there is a great deal of wasted energy, not only at the polling, but afterwards in the practical working. This Bill provides to a certain extent for the popular voice being heard, and that is the other alternative, and I think it is only right and fair to try the other alternative. And I now say, Sir, to you, to this House, and to the country that, with the one exception of the three-fifths majority, I do not see that there is anything in this Bill that the most rabid Good Templar could oppose. I say it is a start in the right direction, and I do hope it will have a fair trial. I do hope it will have the effect of reducing the number of publichouses in the large centres of the colony, and I really think it will work a great deal more good than some of its supporters in this House seem to believe. I intend to support the Bill, because by doing so we shall be conferring on the people the

power of direct veto, without compensation, and that is what I have pledged myself to do.

Mr. BRUCE.—I should like to say a few words on this Bill at this, its final stage, but I am not going to indulge, as some honourable members before me have done, in any recriminations on the votes which have been taken, or on that which is to be taken. I think in this matter one has to satisfy his own conscience and not other people. It is a remarkable fact, in connection with this measure, that when it first saw the light, judging from the communications I received from the country, it received the warm approval of the temperance party, with the exception of clause 15, while at the same time it seemed to meet with the disapproval of those who are spoken of as being "in the trade." What is remarkable is that the position appears to be entirely reversed. The Bill is now receiving the condemnation of the temperance party, or its advocates, in this House, and, curiously enough, it is receiving the approval of those who are supposed, at any rate, to be the champions of those engaged in the liquor traffic. Might I be permitted to say that, in my opinion, neither of these extreme sections appear to understand the measure? It is, in reality, largely a measure of an experimental character. What, after all, is the vital principle of this measure?—and I am addressing myself now particularly to those so-called extreme advocates of temperance in this House—what is the vital principle of the measure? It is to give expression to what have been the wishes of the temperance party ever since I have been in this colony—that is, the regulation of the traffic by the people, instead of by Committees elected by the people. That is really the vital principle of the Bill, and it is surrounded by safeguards of which I, as a moderate man, entirely approve. I may remark, at the present time the situation is not of a normal character. It is of an abnormal character. What have we heard during the last few minutes? We have heard of the passage of a certain measure in the Upper Chamber, and I say the position is of an entirely abnormal and exceptional character. The women of this colony, I regret very much, will have a vote, and on every question—

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. BRUCE.—I hear an honourable member saying, "Hear, hear," but I repeat that I regret very much that that is the case. I am one of those who would like to keep women on that ideal pedestal she has occupied in the past, and who do not think that she should be brought down into the impure atmosphere of political strife. I will not say it is reasonable to assume, but I think it may be so: it is not unreasonable to assume that we shall now have legislation of an hysterical and experimental character. I think it will go in the direction of attempting to make people sober and virtuous by Act of Parliament. It has been said that this is a publicans' Bill; that it is all in the interest of the publicans. Can it be forgotten by any honourable member making such an assertion as that, that in an electorate con-

taining ten thousand people, two thousand of whom are on the roll, if a thousand vote, six hundred votes can shut up every public-house? Can it be said that any measure such as that unduly favours those who are engaged in the liquor traffic? It appears to me that if there is any virtue in regulating the liquor traffic at all by the people, this Bill goes, with excellent safeguards, in that direction. Now I want to say a few words in reference to something that was said by the honourable member for Inangahua, and I regret very much that I am at variance with the honourable gentleman on this question. He has been a consistent advocate of temperance for so many years—indeed, before I settled in this country; but I think the honourable gentleman is mistaken in his views in reference to this Bill. He has complained to-day that under this measure minorities will rule. If minorities will rule under this Bill, what very small minorities would have ruled under the measure that he himself introduced! And he has complained, or alleged rather, that the working-men do not wish public-houses to be set down in their midst, and he instanced the constituency of Linwood as one where no public-house existed. What is this Bill, after all? Is it not to place in the hands of the people the power of extinguishing the liquor-traffic? And if the working-classes are so strongly in favour of extinguishing the liquor traffic as he contends, here, I say, is a weapon by which they can effect their purpose. I do not think these arguments are worthy of my honourable friend. Now, Sir, I have already said that this is legislation we may accept. At any rate, it is legislation of an extremely experimental character. It must be remembered that public-houses can now be closed without any compensation whatever. From an abstract point of view, I am opposed to that. I believe that, if we injure the people engaged in the liquor calling by enactment, we should compensate them for the injury that is done. However, that is a question which is not within the region of practical politics. Now I want to say two or three words with reference to the defects of the measure. In the first place, the licensing districts are too large. I very much fear that in the country districts this Bill will be, in very many instances, absolutely inoperative. The licensing districts should have been the counties created originally in consequence of community of interest. This I pointed out in Committee on the Bill. Now, that is, I believe, a fact; and that the proper course in this matter was not adopted is to be regretted, because I think the Bill goes in the direction of reducing the number of public-houses in cities, and, I think, under the action of this Bill the worst of these houses would be weeded out. There is another defect in the Bill, in my opinion, and that is, it throws the whole expense of these elections upon the ratepayers. The ratepayers all over this colony are already too heavily taxed. Here is a question relating to the whole population, and yet we are throwing the expense of these matters absolutely on the ratepayers, and on them

Mr. Bruce

alone. At the present time we are paying over £500,000 in local taxation, and here is another impost—the last pound to go in the direction of breaking the camel's back. There is another thing which has not been alluded to by any of the preceding speakers. I would have gone further than the Bill goes: I would have said that a three-fifths majority only could reduce the number of licenses in a district. Is it logical to give ten men protection under the three-fifths majority, and one man only the protection or risk of the bare majority? There does not appear to be any logic in that. It is absolutely inconsistent with what I hold to be the principle of the Bill—that of giving the control into the hands of the people. The apathy of the people under the existing system has been alluded to to-night. This inertia, however, is not likely to continue. The majority of the people, I believe, are content, in consequence of their action under the old system, to let—I will not say “well,” but—“not too bad” alone. I, like the honourable member for Wakatipu, who has just spoken, do not speak as an extreme temperance man; I am not a total abstainer, nor have I any wish to be so; and, at the same time, I am very strongly opposed to those temperance lecturers, who have been alluded to to-night, going round and branding publicans in the manner in which they do. A publican is a very useful man in the community, and if you wish to make a man an outcast you have only to treat him as such, and he occupies the position assigned to him. All the same, I believe we ought to have the regulation of this traffic, so that its efficiency may be secured—I have already said that. I have only a word or two to say in conclusion. I do not believe, as I said before, that you can make people either sober or virtuous by Act of Parliament. But you may assist in some degree in giving them an inclination in that direction. I do not believe that you can by enactment eradicate all that is vicious in a people; but you can control, perhaps, in some degree the vicious propensities. There is another thing I wish to say, and that is that, as the honourable member for Inangahua said, this is not a settlement of the question: in fact, no member of the House could bring in a measure which would be a settlement of the question so long as extreme views are held on either side. No Bill containing absolutely prohibitive provisions would be in the interest of the community under existing conditions; and for this reason: that if you legislate in advance of public opinion you invite infractions of the law, and the result is demonstrated in America to be demoralising all round. I believe rather in evolution than in revolution. The more slowly we go in this direction the more quickly we shall travel. All steps of this kind must be taken slowly, and not in advance of public opinion. The reason why I am in favour of this Bill is that I believe it goes in the direction of placing the regulation of the traffic in the hands of the people, and even though it is

necessary to have half of the total number of electors on the roll recording their votes before you can have a valid poll; if there is any interest felt in the question at all, there need be no difficulty about that. On the whole the Government may be, from my point of view, congratulated on the introduction of the measure. Of course it is experimental, but at the same time I think it is a measure that deserves a fair trial.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—Sir, in rising to speak on this subject, I may say that I have listened with very great attention to the speeches made on the subject to-night; but I am bound to say that a good many of the speakers—especially the last two speakers—have spoken without having made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the provisions of the Bill on which they spoke. There is no man whom I more greatly respect for his general consistency in regard to great principles than I do the last speaker. He is generally very consistent in matters of this kind; but he has spoken on this Bill, apparently, without recognising the great fact that the Bill violates one of the first and greatest principles connected with self-government or democracy. I cannot imagine anything more inconsistent with anything like what we call first principles, or good principles, in connection with any measure than that we should first of all say that interested parties—parties who have a pecuniary interest in any public question—are the parties who should be placed in a superior position, and exercise a more potential vote than those disinterested parties who have no object in view but the welfare of their fellow-creatures. But the great blot in this Bill is at the latter end of the 15th clause, which requires that one-half of the electors on the roll must vote. Now, let us see, what does that mean? It means that the best-organized, the most active, the most wealthy, and in many respects the most influential portion of the community, who have a direct pecuniary interest in maintaining this traffic, no matter what it costs in the way of blood, groans, or tears to the rest of the community—that those who have an interest in maintaining it for the sake of their own pockets, no matter what may result, or how many thousands of widows and orphans and still greater sufferers it may create, are under this Bill not only to be placed in a superior position, and to have a more potential vote, than those who have no interest whatever but the welfare of their fellow-countrymen and of their country, but we actually find a special provision artfully inserted into this Bill by which the votes of ten thousand patriots can be nullified by a hundred schemers, who have nothing to do but to stuff the electoral rolls with names of dummies who have no existence, and therefore cannot vote. Can anything be more damaging to any measure than to find such a provision in it? Talk about minorities or majorities! surely, if you do make a difference, you should let that difference be in favour of those who have no pecuniary bias in the matter. But, Sir, I do not

think the last two speakers could have considered for one moment what this Bill really does. In the first place, it gives the most interested and the best-informed and best-financed political party in this country an immediate and direct and strong interest in stuffing the rolls of this colony as far as they can possibly be stuffed, and at the last moment, when there is no prospect of and no power for revising the rolls. For their purpose, dead men are better than live men. One man may be put on under half a dozen different names, and there is no penalty. They are not called upon to record their votes, so they run no risk with regard to personation. There is nothing to do but to get the roll stuffed, and to stuff it to any extent, and then to stop away from the poll, not taking the trouble to vote, and keep as many others away as possible. I say the thing becomes a dead-letter, and there is no power to carry out a reduction of the licenses so long as that provision remains in this Bill. We know that is what will be done; we have seen it done when there was a great deal of difficulty in getting persons put on the roll, and a great deal of danger in calling upon them to vote; but under this Bill there is no limit—nothing to prevent rolls from being doubled, trebled, quadrupled, if we are to leave the question to be settled in that way—and that is the way in which the question will be settled; and so long as that provision stays in the Bill the Bill will be absolutely worthless in every sense of the word—except to give the publicans a secure tenure of their licenses. In fact, it is a delusion and a sham. The country asks for bread, and we are giving it a stone. There is another provision which, as I said before, gives a positive advantage to the pecuniarily-interested portion of the community with regard to the votes. We have heard—I do not know how far it is true—that the brewers and publicans in their wisdom called upon the Premier and suggested to him that the patriots of the country, those who are called the prohibitionists and those who were interested, as they said, in the abolition of the traffic, should not be allowed to vote. Sir, that was a proposal worthy of them—worthy of their ideas, worthy of the men whose business in life is to fill their own pockets by emptying the pockets of the weak and hungry, and to call every one who resents these selfish designs a faddist or a fanatic. Sir, how many of the greatest and best men whom the world has ever seen would be held unfit to vote by such judges! When one whom they would call the greatest fanatic and “faddist” in the world—the great philanthropist Howard—went through Europe and expressed opinions so vastly different from those of the rest of the community, and so strongly expressed those opinions, did any one propose that his opinions should be shut out, that his views should not be heard, that he should not have any vote in the matter? So far from that, even the Sovereigns of Russia and Turkey treated that man's opinion as worth more than the opinions of any thousand in the world besides—and that is what our great

philanthropists and patriots are entitled to in matters of this kind. The honest opinion of one such patriot is of far more value than the ravings of all the licensees and publicans in New Zealand. Sir, I speak reluctantly against the Government in this matter. There is some good in the Bill as a Licensing Bill, but as a veto it is a delusion and a snare. It has been said that the hand of the Government has been forced by the honourable member for Inangahua. Now, if the Government had been wise and patriotic it would have been exceedingly glad to see the subject taken in hand by some one else rather than themselves. The Premier and the Minister of Education especially have all their lives been engaged in the opposite direction to that of temperance reform. The Premier's early education was calculated to lead all his sympathies in the direction of the trade. The Minister of Education has used his pen, ever since he left off playing marbles, in the direction of defending the traffic. He has edited papers specially devoted to the support of the brewing interest. What is still worse, he has acknowledged in this House that he has come here pledged not to improve our licensing system. Sir, is there anything that could more entirely disqualify men to deal with this question than the position these gentlemen are admitted to occupy? I am glad to support them in matters in which I believe them to be right, and I hope I shall continue to do so; but I shall not support them in matters in which I consider their sympathies are not in the right direction, and I should have been extremely glad if they had had the good judgment to allow this matter to be dealt with by those whose sympathies are in the right direction—that is, in the interests of temperance, morality, and the general welfare of the community at large. Now, I think, under these circumstances, it is a very great pity that this Bill has been taken up by the Government at all. Such a Bill will not give satisfaction to the country. It will not prevent this burning question from taking a foremost place in the next election, and no one regrets more than I do that it should be left as a leading question at the next election. I entirely disapprove of block votes altogether, especially of block votes used to exclude men from this House because their opinions may not be what the populace believe to be right on one or two questions. This is a great question, I admit; but I always regret when I see the votes of the people thrown away in block votes, and I think this Bill is directly calculated to make people come more determinedly to the poll on this question than they ever did before. It is very much to be regretted, and I am sorry that we should be obliged to lead things in that direction. I know the Bill is about to be carried, and I regret it on other grounds. The best part of the present Government supporters—if not the largest portion, the best portion of the present Government supporters—have come to this House pledged to support temperance measures. Their support of the Ballance Govern-

ment, and even of this Government, has been of the most zealous, faithful, and disinterested character, and yet the Government are prepared to force the Bill through this House which their best supporters do not approve of—the Bill which has been condemned to-night strongly, and ably too, even by those who for party purposes intend to vote for it. The Government have placed all these temperance supporters in a false position by taking up this question, which might have been better left to other hands of their own party,—far better left in the stronger and cleaner hands of the honourable member for Inangahua. I need not speak longer on the question; I have said strongly what I think on the subject. I may say I never was a party-man. I never felt that my duty was to come to this House to follow any Government through thick and thin, right or wrong, on any question. This is a question I believe to be an important one—one that I feel very strongly upon—one that deeply affects the welfare of the country; and, whether I support or do not support any Government, I shall do what I consider to be in the interests and for the safety and the honour of the country at large.

Mr. MACKINTOSH.—Sir, I do not agree with the last speaker as to the action of the Government with regard to this measure. I consider it was the duty of the Government to introduce this measure, and unless the Government had taken the matter in hand there was no prospect whatever of its becoming law. The Bill introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua was largely supported on its second reading. One-half of those who voted for that measure did not intend to follow it any further. To my certain knowledge this is the case, as a large number of honourable members expressed themselves to that effect. The question is, Is the present measure an improvement on the law as it now stands? I maintain that it is a vast improvement. Under the present law ratepayers alone have a voice in regard to the control of the liquor traffic, whereas under this Bill the whole adult population of the colony, male and female, are called upon to give expression to their views as to whether the sale of intoxicating drinks is to continue or not, and, if so, to what extent. Is it not an immense boon that the question has been relegated to the whole population of the colony, male and female? The honourable gentleman has pointed out a single fault in this measure, and condemns it *in toto*. The fault he finds is in the proportion of voters out of the total number of the adult population necessary to effect certain purposes. Now, there is nothing in that. If experience shows that the Act does not work well, it will be an easy matter to amend it in that particular, but my firm belief is that it will work very well, and that when the vote is taken from one end of the colony to the other more than half of the population will be found to have voted on the question. The publicans may plan as they like, but they will not be able to defeat the objects of this Bill. Besides, in the Bill before the House

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the districts are what they ought to be—namely, of considerable extent. Fancy what the districts are at present! I could point out some small townships where there are four Committees; and there are very insignificant localities also where two Committees exist. Now, these Committees have very extensive powers. They can by a little agitation shut up one or two houses or every house in the locality. This Bill is calculated to do justice to the present publicans. And is it not right it should be so? Was not that interest established by law? And is it not requisite and perfectly right that the law should deal justly with them? It has become the fashion of late to run down the publicans and abuse everything connected with them. I trust that total prohibition will be brought about in due time by educating the people against strong drink. I look forward to the time when every public-house in the colony will be closed; and this measure is calculated to bring that about. It will give the publicans peace, and a certain amount of security, while lecturers are educating the people to give one vote that will extinguish the liquor traffic. I sincerely wish to see the sale and manufacture of drink abolished in this colony; and I trust that the time is not far distant when drink shall not be manufactured or legally sold in the colony. In the meantime, deal fairly with publicans; as in addition to paying £40 a year for their license they have many other difficulties to contend with, and they are interfered with in various ways—by the police and others. My wish is to do them justice while the drink traffic is sanctioned by the law of the land. The present Government, during this session, have introduced and passed several measures highly calculated to advance the cause of temperance, and in doing so have been heartily supported by a large majority of the members of this House, and notably so in extending the voting-power in regard to the management of the liquor traffic to the whole of the adult population of the colony. Yet if you dare to have an opinion of your own, or to say that one-half of the people should vote on the liquor question, you are condemned at once by the extreme prohibitionists in this House and out of it. Had not this Bill been introduced by a powerful Government it would not have been nearly so useful a measure. Now, my honourable friend who last spoke said that had the Bill been introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua it would have been a better Bill. No, it would not. It would have been a one-sided Bill. It would not have done justice to the licensing interest, as this Bill does. The action of the extreme prohibitionists has retarded the cause of temperance. The extreme action taken in the Sydenham case raised sympathy in favour of the publicans. I am sure that is the case. These extreme men will not give this Government credit for sincerity in endeavouring to pass this useful measure—a measure which, I contend, is well calculated to do justice to both sides.

Mr. REEVES.—Sir, I hope the House will pardon me for rising even at this stage to support the Bill, and to defend the Government, possibly at some little length. As a rule, the debate on a Bill comes on its second reading, and speeches of any length on the third reading are looked upon as a nuisance, and almost as an impertinence. But this time we have the unusual spectacle of a Bill passing its second reading on the voices, and then being vehemently debated, criticized, and denounced on its third reading. At the same time, I may say that this turn of events has not at all taken the Government by surprise. It is only to a great extent what we expected. We never supposed for a moment that the Bill would please both extreme parties in existence in the colony upon this question. In fact, it was a moot point with some of us whether it would not displease both of them to a very great degree. We were quite certain it would displease one of them, and the only consolation we had was that if it displeased one it was quite certain to please the other, and *vice versa*. We did not know when we introduced it which side it would displease. We rather thought it would be hotly opposed by the publican party, and supported by all but the most extreme of the temperance side. But it would appear that no sooner did the publicans show signs of accepting the Bill than the other side seemed disposed to denounce it. It has been laid to the charge of this unhappy measure that it is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare in temperance reform because it has been accepted by a number of those supposed to be friendly to the publicans. Sir, why did they accept it? It was because they thought it was the less of two evils; because they knew that reform must come, and, though they did not like reform, they were prepared to accept anything short of annihilation. It was because they saw that the honourable member for Inangahua denounced the Bill hotly. I say it was the eloquent way in which that honourable gentleman denounced the measure which secured for this Bill a great deal more support from the friends of the publicans and brewers than it would otherwise have received from them. That honourable gentleman has used such language with regard to the measure that the publicans, many of them, were tempted to distrust the evidence of their senses and their intelligence, and to think that this Bill could not be so bad from their point of view as they had thought. As a matter of fact, I know that, in spite of all that, they do not like the Bill. I know that if it were not for the existence of a powerful and ruthless prohibitionist party in this colony this Bill would have been cast into the sea, if the publicans and the brewers' party could have cast it there. But, as they think they must make their choice between reform and annihilation, a number of them are prepared to accept reform, and to make the best of a bad job. With regard to some of the arguments which have been cast in the teeth of the Government and upon the head of the Bill, I

may say this: The Bill has been criticized in the House in very excited language, and the same kind of language has been applied outside the House to the Bill's authors. But, for my own part, I think that temperance in liquor and temperance in language ought not to be so utterly divorced as they would appear to be held to be. In replying to objections which have been made, I may say that there is a special reason for dealing calmly with the objections which have been hurled against the Bill by some of its opponents, and by one honourable gentleman in particular, whom I still wish to think a friend. It is quite true that there are interested persons in different parts of the colony who are attempting to pit one portion of the Liberal party against the rest; but I decline at the present time to believe that their efforts will be successful. I decline to believe that the Liberal party, which upon nineteen questions out of twenty is at one, will in one moment be cleft asunder simply because on the temperance question they cannot entirely agree. I hope the day is not yet come when the Liberal cause will be divided because we happen to differ on one important subject. Let us remember the nineteen subjects upon which we can agree and fight side by side, and let us not be severed because of the twentieth upon which we disagree. Mr. Saunders gave us a very decided speech upon the Bill, and such a one as might have been expected. I never expected that honourable gentleman would see with the same eyes as the Government on the temperance question. His beliefs are not our beliefs: his improvements are not our improvements. He wants such a Bill as he would call a Veto Bill, and which we should call a Prohibitionist Bill. But he reluctantly admitted that, as a Licensing Bill, there was some good in this Bill. That is all we could expect from an honourable gentleman holding his views. More than that we did not expect from him, and more than that we did not desire or deserve from him. When he turned from the Bill to speak about myself he did me very much less justice. He stated that from my earliest years I used my pen consistently against the temperance cause. Well, Sir, an anonymous journalist is not usually expected to take the public into his confidence as to what he may or may not have written. But let me say this: As far as I can remember, I have, during the course of my life, written two articles, and two only, on the licensing question. One of those articles was written in the *Lyttelton Times* some ten or eleven years ago, when there was first a question as to opening publichouses in Sydenham. It was an article strongly against the step. It was upon the side of temperance. The people of Sydenham had raised the point themselves, and I advised them to keep the publichouses out of Sydenham altogether while there was yet time. The other article was written in the same paper, and called attention to the fact that no licensing cases were given against the publicans when heard before a certain Magistrate—they were invariably decided in the interests of the pub-

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lican. The article did not mince matters. It openly showed that in a number of cases tried before that Magistrate judgment was given in a certain direction. The subject occupied a good deal of public attention at the time, and I believe that article, of which I was the author, was the means of doing no small amount of good. Those are the only two articles that I can remember having ever written in a newspaper on the licensing question. That will show the great injustice of the honourable gentleman's remarks. Then, before I pass from the honourable gentleman's speech, I would say that he complained that this was a Bill which put restrictions in the way of disinterested and self-sacrificing people who went to the licensing-polls simply for the good of their fellow-creatures, and that it gave advantages to the other side who are not disinterested—who are not seeking the good of their fellow-creatures. But the advocates of reform constantly ask for extraordinary powers to enable them to deal with the property and liberty of their fellow-citizens. As a rule I support the measures which give them the powers they ask. But are these ever to be given to them without being hedged round with some safeguards? When the powers are so extraordinary, so unusual, and so unprecedented as the powers asked for by the prohibitionists, I say that we should not depart from our usual custom and give them without any safeguard whatever. Remember this: What are these disinterested gentlemen asking for? They are asking that the bare majority should virtually confiscate a large amount of property without any compensation. That is the least important aspect of it. For they are asking for the power to ruin a large number of decent and respectable citizens. They are asking for power to interfere with the social habits of ordinary life,—with the habits of thousands of temperate, sober, and decent people. They are not simply asking for power to do away with drunkenness, but they want to take away the right to drink alcoholic liquor from hundreds and thousands of temperate people. That is a most extraordinary power for any section of the community to ask, and I say that in giving that power we have a right to hedge it round with certain safeguards. There is one charge I wish to reply to, and that is a most unfair charge which was made against certain of us this afternoon by the opponents of the Bill. We are asked now, at this eleventh hour, to reverse the work of the session—to postpone dealing with this question until next session. We are told that those who come here pledged to give local control to the people should vote for postponing the question, and that any honourable gentlemen who said at the last election that they would oppose any changes in the existing law ought to turn round now and vote for postponing the question until the next session. The last attack was particularly unfair, and it was levelled especially at me.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No; there are several instances.

Mr. REEVES.—Well, the honourable gentleman's information must be different from mine. As far as I know, there were two gentlemen who were thus pledged at the last election. One of them reconsidered his position, and voted for the second reading of the Bill that the honourable member for Inangahua brought in.

Sir R. STOUT.—I have a list of about a dozen.

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable member for Inangahua found no fault with him. The other one to the very last voted against this House dealing with the licensing question this session. At the last time he stated definitely that, if the House decided to deal with this question by passing the second reading of the honourable member for Inangahua's Bill, then it would become the duty of every one who did not want to disfranchise himself to try to make as reasonable and as sensible a reform as possible. The House passed the second reading of the honourable member for Inangahua's Bill. The House passed it by an enormous majority, showing thereby its determination to deal with the licensing question this session. Moreover, angry accusations were hurled at the Government by those who suspected them of wishing to delay the question. Therefore the Government were put in this position: Either they had to take up the question themselves, or be dragged at the heels of a private member dealing with social legislation of the first magnitude, and thereby admit that they were afraid to deal with it themselves. The Government of the country took the matter up, and with the approval of a large majority they introduced a Bill. In the face of every opposition, that Bill was read and passed through Committee by an enormous majority. That Bill had to be forced through Committee, and now we have come to the third reading; and yet we are told that this House is to stultify itself, that the Government is to stultify itself, and that I am to stultify myself—

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to make a personal explanation. I have not mentioned the honourable gentleman's name in any speech I have made.

Mr. REEVES.—That is perfectly true. But the honourable gentleman did say that honourable members who had been elected, and had pledged themselves at the time, to make no alteration in the licensing-laws of the colony, would break their pledge should they vote against him to-night. I made such a pledge. Therefore his words applied to me, and there is no getting out of it. I say there is a legal maxim that one cannot blow hot and blow cold. The honourable member for Inangahua has been blowing very hot indeed as to the necessity of dealing with the licensing question this session. I think it will be paying him only a fair compliment to say that it was on account of his advocacy of it that this question has had to be dealt with this session. Had a less vigorous, less determined man been returned for Inangahua this question would never have been forced on Parliament

this session; but, having forced it on, I do not think the honourable gentleman can now blow cold, and protest against the question being dealt with this session. Is that a fair way to treat this much-abused Bill? I first of all wish to say a word or two about a Bill which is not this Bill—a Bill which has been referred to in this debate. The honourable member for Halswell, in the very interesting speech delivered this afternoon, quoted the opinions of Mr. Bright and of Mr. Gladstone. He was assailed for doing so, and was reminded that Mr. Bright was an individualist Liberal—which is true—and therefore his arguments would not be given very much weight to by socialistic Liberals. The honourable gentleman was also reminded that Mr. Gladstone had changed his views, and that it was not fair to quote the opinions of the Mr. Gladstone of many years ago—that one should rather look at the attitude of the Mr. Gladstone of to-day. The member for Halswell was reminded that a Bill brought in by Mr. Gladstone's Government contains the principle of local control of the liquor trade. I admit the justice of the reminder, and I look not at the Mr. Gladstone of years ago, but at the Mr. Gladstone of to-day. What is the Bill introduced to-day by the Gladstone Government? It is a Bill which remits the question of the direct veto to a Conservative class of people, the ratepayers. It does not go to the extent of providing a periodical veto poll, but it states that, unless a tenth of the ratepayers petition for it, no matter what may be the views of the mass of non-ratepayers as to the importance of having the hotels closed, there is to be no poll at all. The Bill does not touch wholesale licenses, and so is there open to the same objections as are urged against our Bill. Then, if it becomes law it is not to come into operation for three years: three years' warning is to be given to the public and those interested before a direct-veto poll can be taken. And then, when a direct-veto poll is to be taken, how is it to be taken? On a ratepayers' vote, with a two-thirds majority. They do not go nearly so far as our Bill, which proposes a majority of three-fifths. And under Gladstone's Bill, what is the result of a poll? Why, Sir, the licenses of the railway restaurants, of hotels established for the comfort and accommodation of the public, and of eating-houses where liquor may be retailed are in no case to be affected. As Sir William Harcourt said in introducing the Bill, it was only aimed at the gin-palace, the bar taproom, and the beer-shop. It did not propose to interfere with the ordinary life and habits of the people. As a measure of reform our Bill is leagues ahead of it. Yet, what did Sir Wilfrid Lawson say about the Gladstone Government Bill? I think it will be admitted that he carries weight with temperance people. We poor politicians may deserve the hard things said of us, but Sir Wilfrid Lawson has stood in the forefront of temperance reform for at least a quarter of a century. What did he say? Did he denounce it as a sham? Did he say no true Liberal could vote for it? Did he

denounce it as reactionary? No; he called it a Citizens' Bill brought in in the interests of all citizens of the United Kingdom. He called it an extension of local self-government. He said he could not comprehend how any Liberal could vote against it. Finally, he called it the noblest Bill brought in since the attack on negro slavery, and prophesied that a tempest of public approval would carry it to a triumphant issue. Contrast his words with those hurled by New Zealand prohibitionists against our Bill, much more advanced as it is than Gladstone's. Not that I wish to press the analogy too far. I do not suggest that, because the English licensing reform is far behind ours, therefore we should not go on at all. I say, Sir, that we ought to be ahead of the English law: and we are ahead of it. Sir, what is our Bill? Let us look at it. First of all, in previous Acts the licensing question has been simply left in the hands of the ratepayers, who are a conservative class. Our Bill popularises the licensing franchise; enables all residents to vote; will shortly enable all women to vote. Women are claimed to be the special friends of temperance. I believe they are, though not necessarily of prohibition. The ratepayers have been tempted to oppose the closing of hotels for fear of depriving the local bodies of the fees, and so raising the rates. Now the ratepayers will no longer dominate the polls. Then, our Bill greatly reduces the number of districts and Committees, and in that acts in the spirit of true local-government reform. It enlarges the districts, and so gives prohibition, if obtained, a chance of being a reality. The honourable member for Halswell said nothing truer than when he objected to "parish prohibition." The attempt on such a scale is absurd. In America, when they try prohibition, they try it in what are virtually nations; and observers of their experiments say that in the interior of prohibition districts the system is successful enough, whereas on the fringe the law is evaded wholesale. The only objection I have to this measure is with regard to the prohibition poll. The districts are not nearly large enough. I do not care how small the administrative districts may be, nor do I care how large the prohibition districts are. I say that, as regards total prohibition, if the districts were as large as the education districts there would be some chance of its becoming a rational success; but in the present size of the districts it would not be successful. Then, the Bill enacts that in the case of a district where the population is stationary you will never have an increase in the licenses. Then, very great restrictions are placed in the way of increasing licenses in districts where the population may increase. It involves the principle of reduction by a bare majority to the extent of 25 per cent. of the number of houses every three years. This means that every three years, if a bare majority wishes to close 25 per cent. of the houses, they may do so, and the result is that within a measurable space of time you may carry virtual prohibition, and that by a bare

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majority. This Bill does give prohibition,—virtual prohibition, by a bare majority; but it is provided that it shall only be done slowly, over a long period of years. Thus, take a district containing forty-eight houses as a case in point. In seven years you can reduce those forty-eight to twenty-one houses, and in ten years you can reduce the number to sixteen. Do you believe, does anybody maintain, that the mass of the people ask for greater power to be given to a bare majority than that?—a bare majority not merely of ratepayers, but of male residents and of female residents. As for the power of reduction, it is quite true that reduction is not equivalent to immediate prohibition. What we say is, if you want local prohibition after a series of years you may have it by a bare majority, but if you want it in a hurry then you must get it by a substantial majority, and that is all. I have already given my opinion as to what prohibition really means—that it is an extraordinary and tyrannical power; that it not only affects vested interests, that it not only affects the livelihood of working-men and women and investors, but the social life of hundreds and thousands of respectable, honest people; it takes away from them their individual freedom as regards their social life. An honourable gentleman who was speaking strongly against the Bill said, "If you don't trust a bare majority in the case of licensing, are you prepared not to trust it in the case of factory-laws and the regulation of shops?" Well, Sir, what are our factory-laws? What are the laws we propose to carry with regard to the regulation of shops? Is there any analogy at all between the shop-laws and the confiscatory and tyrannical proposals of prohibition? There is no analogy whatever. If our factory-law was a law that gave to the people in a district every three years the power to close all the woollen-factories and all the boot-factories without paying any compensation, then I would not trust it to a bare majority. If the Act with regard to shops were an Act which meant that those shops should be shut up not half a day in six days, but seven days a week, without giving the shopkeepers compensation, I would not trust it to a bare majority. But there is no analogy between regulating these industries and the extraordinary power that is asked for to prohibit the liquor trade. The analogy is a false one. To come back to the Bill. It transfers from a Committee elected by the ratepayers the power of reduction: that is taken away from the Committee and transferred to a bare majority of the people. And remember this: Certain opponents of the Bill have chosen to declare that the Committees elected by the ratepayers had the power of prohibition. I do not think that power has ever belonged to them. At any rate, let us look and see what they have done with it. Have they ever exercised it except in one case?

Sir R. STOUT.—Various cases.

Mr. REEVES.—They have in one or two trifling instances in small districts, where one or two houses were closed because they were

not required. But what has been the result of the administration by these elective Committees? Contrast the number of licenses in New Zealand in 1881 with the number of licenses existing in 1893. The result of the administration by these Committees, with these fancied powers, the loss of which is regretted and deplored, has been a steady increase in the number of licensed houses in New Zealand. That has been the result.

Sir R. STOUT.—How many?

Mr. REEVES.—A large number. That was the result of giving the power to Committees. We take away from the Committees the right of doing what they have done and give it to the people; we take it from the ratepayers and give it to men and women. Then, there is the by no means unimportant reform in regard to the hours. Henceforth licensed houses may keep open till eleven o'clock and no longer. I venture to say that the experience of people who have watched shows that there have been more drunkenness and gambling between eleven and twelve at night than during any other hour in the twenty-four. Then, the Bill stops the creation of special districts—a power which was always open to abuse, and which in some instances has been abused. Then, the Bill makes indorsed convictions affect the house and not merely the licensee. Then, the Bill brings clubs under inspection. Moreover, it throws obstructions in the way of the creation of new clubs, and gives the Licensing Committees, elected by the popular voice of the district, the power to veto the granting of any fresh charters. And this is the Bill—a Bill that does all this—that is denounced as a mockery, a delusion, and a sham. This is declared to be a Tory Bill, and a Bill for the introducing of which we are not true Liberals. Now, why? On what grounds do honourable gentlemen base these extraordinary charges? They base them, apparently, on the complaint, first of all, that we demand a three-fifths majority for total prohibition, and, secondly, that there is a proviso that half the people on the roll must vote. As regards the three-fifths majority, I have to a certain extent dealt with this already; but I do not flinch from the position at all. I do not accept the taunt that has been thrown out that any man who demands a distinct majority for the direct veto is no true Liberal. I again go back to the falsehood of the analogy between representative government and government by direct veto. There is no such analogy; the two things are entirely different. Let me say I do mistrust this delegation of the powers of representative government to a direct and simple veto. My view is that the true mission of a democracy is to stand by representative government. Make the franchise as liberal as you possibly can; make the mode of election as simple as you possibly can—no Hare system—no complicated fad of that kind. Bring the representatives in as close touch with the people as you can. Bring public opinion to work upon your representatives as much as you like, through the newspapers, through the plat-

form, by the circulation of *Hansard*, and the reporting of speeches. But, when all that is done, leave your government to your representatives. Because, I say, the verdict of history is in favour of representative government as against government by direct popular vote. Now, it is said that the referendum works well in certain countries. But the direct veto is not the referendum, and when the other night I stated it was a form of it I paid it a compliment which I do not think it by any means deserves. Because what is this veto? It is neither initiation nor referendum. What is the initiative? The initiative is that the people shall ask Parliament to discuss and take up certain questions. What is the referendum? It is that, after Parliament has taken up the question, and fought it out, discussed it, amended it, and finished with it, possibly the question may be referred to the people to say whether they indorse the action of their representatives or not. It is a simpler form of appeal to the country than dissolution: that is all the referendum is. But this direct veto is initiative, referendum, and discussion by representatives all rolled into one. This is government not by representatives, not by discussion, not by amendment, not by compromise—it is by the bare and immediate and instantaneous vote of a majority. Now, if the honourable member for Inangahua, my honourable friend—if he will allow me to call him my friend—is prepared to say that he will dispense with all discussion in Parliament—that a printed Bill is to be brought into the House; that there shall be no motion for its introduction, no first reading, no second reading; no motion to go into Committee on it, no discussion on clause after clause and clause after clause, with the accessory innumerable amendments; no division after division, as we saw on a memorable evening here; no discussion on the third reading, with a possible amendment "That the Bill be read this day three months" on the third reading; no motion that it do pass, with again an opportunity for discussion and reconsidering the question; no reference to a revisory Chamber, with a first reading, second reading, discussion in Committee, and a possible reference to a Select Committee, and a third reading there; no veto in the hands of the Crown; but the simple introduction of a printed Bill, to be passed in its integrity there and then, without discussion and without hesitation—then, I say, he has established a case for an analogy between representative government and government by direct veto by a bare majority. But, until you are prepared to abolish all this procedure, and abrogate all these things, there is no true analogy between the two. I do hope the democracy will not abolish all checks and obstacles, and provisions for consideration, discussion, and reconsideration, and amendment; because look at the history of reform in New Zealand! How many times has any proposal as placed before the people at a general election there and then become law without any reference, delay

or amendment? How often can it be said that a Bill or a proposal submitted to the people is not made workable and improved by the process that it goes through? Almost never. Sometimes, indeed, the delays are undue, but they are a concession to public opinion. But, as a rule, all this process results in improvement. And what it does result in is that there is never that feeling on the part of the minority in the country of absolute, illogical, unfair tyranny that there would be if a simple bare proposal of a majority at the poll were forced on them without all these opportunities of discussion, amendment, and improvement. It is this state of things that makes the minority submit to the working of a democracy. If we were to have government by the simple vote of the people I doubt whether, under certain circumstances, the minority would not be driven to exasperation. Under such a system our children might see a civil war. Then, Sir, as I said before, what does history show us? Look at one example, when, under the most favourable circumstances, national democracy tried the experiment of government by popular vote, and not by representation. Let honourable gentlemen read the work of Aristotle on the Constitution of Athens, or, if they have not the time, let them peruse any common Greek history to refresh their memories as to the history of the Athenian democracy. There you had the experiment tried under the most favourable circumstances in which it could be tried. The average Athenian democrat was what we should call a cultured and educated gentleman; he was a man of property; a man physically and intellectually trained; a man fit to talk with Socrates or walk with Plato—to appreciate the poetry of Sophocles and the art of Phidias. The democracy of Athens was head and shoulders, intellectually and in education, above a large modern community. Moreover, it consisted of men who, as I have stated, were men of substance; they had not to toil incessantly; they had not to devote their days to manual labour. They had an enormous slave-population to do their work for them; and the result was that they were able to devote their leisure time—and their leisure time was large—to the study of public questions. They were almost a race of professional politicians—most of them without pay. And yet what was the result? That although the experiment was a brilliant and glorious failure, yet, inasmuch as it did not impose the proper checks and the proper obstacles to hasty decisions of the people, in this respect it failed; and, I think, in this respect at least it has been deemed to be a failure by all constitutional writers and abstract critics. I am afraid I have taken the House rather far away from the Bill; honourable gentlemen have been very patient to listen to me, and are very kind. I apologize for going so far out of the way, but this is a new departure, this granting of the direct veto. And, as I shall be one who will have to defend my action on it, and as I am one who feel very keenly about it—as I feel that unless it is accompanied by

proper checks and safeguards the democracy may be taking a new departure which may be fatal hereafter—I feel it my duty to stand up and give, frankly and fully, my reasons for dissenting from it. Passing from this, it is said that all the prohibitionists ask is direct control—direct local control—absolute local control; that they do not want prohibition; that they recognise they are in a minority. I am glad they recognise they are in a minority. But, Sir, I do not recognise the right of a minority to absolutely shape the legislation of this House. I say, when a minority cannot get things absolutely its own way, cannot get a Bill which absolutely satisfies it, I do not think it should turn round and use strong language with regard to the majority. I am glad the prohibitionists recognise that they are in a minority. I am glad they recognise that the moderates and the opposite extremists are in a large majority, and I think they should concede the right of the large majority to shape the legislation of this House on lines which that majority consider reasonable. The honourable member for Inangahua said they did not ask for prohibition—all they asked for was absolute local control. The use of the word “control” by platform speakers outside is a sophisticated confusion of the word “control” with the word “annihilation.” This Bill gives you absolute control, in so far as you can control, govern, and restrict the traffic. It gives you more: it gives you power gradually, over a series of years, of virtually working that traffic out of existence on a bare majority by a series of reductions. I do not call that control. I call that a slow process of annihilation. The Bill not only gives control, but it gives more than control, to the bare majority. But it says, if you want this annihilation to be done all in a hurry, then that power must only be given to a substantial majority. I say that control is one thing, and annihilation is another, and that prohibition is not control, but annihilation. We ought to guard ourselves against confusing these two terms. A father has a right to control his child, but he has not the right to terminate its existence at his own sweet will. A schoolmaster has a right to control his pupil, but he has no right to murder him. The gaoler has control of the prisoner, but has no right to shoot the prisoner at his pleasure. Control is one thing; annihilation is another; and we should not allow the public mind to be confused on that very important issue. We are told there is no half-way house between absolute free-trade in liquor and the giving of the right of prohibition by a bare majority. That is exactly what I deny. There is the power of absolute control; there is the whole system of licensing, or else the licensing-laws ought to be swept off the statute-book. Are we to have free-trade in liquor, tempered by an annual poll at which a bare majority of the people shall have the right to determine what is right for us? What would be the result? New Zealand would be deluged with liquor from one end of the colony to the

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other, and every year people would be driven to the poll to decide whether they should be deluged with liquor for another twelve months, or whether the whole thing was to be suddenly knocked on the head. There would be no moderation, no halting between these two extremes, no licensing, no restriction; but free-trade on the one hand, and prohibition on the other. I say there is a half-way house in this matter, and the half-way house is provided in this Bill. The honourable member for Selwyn admitted that there was good in this Bill as a Licensing Bill. Had it not been for the peculiar views he holds, I venture to say he would have admitted not only that there was good in the Bill, but the Bill was good almost from end to end. I do not agree, as an individual, with everything that is in the Bill. Practical politicians know that a Bill brought down by the Government is always the result of compromise—that no member of a Government is allowed to have absolutely his own way in a Bill, but that a matter is fought out in Cabinet, and the Bill is the result of an agreement between members of the Government. Then it is brought down, and members of the Government stand loyally by it on important points. At the same time, I do not think that in any of the important charges that have been brought against this Bill its opponents have substantiated their case. I have dealt with the three-fifths majority. I now come to deal with the other charge—that the Bill will be a sham—will be nugatory—because of the provision in subsection (5) of clause 15 that one-half the people on the roll shall vote. Now, if there were to be only an ordinary purging of the rolls between now and the licensing election I should say the charge had some foundation. But there is to be no ordinary purging of the rolls; there is to be such a purgation as New Zealand has never seen before. It is to be more than purgation. The whole of the dead men, the whole of the lunatics, the whole of the lazy and apathetic people—so feelingly referred to by some of my honourable friends—are to be swept off in one act.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—They are to be put on again directly.

Mr. REEVES.—They are to be put on again directly! I venture to say, Stuff and nonsense.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—And ten times the number.

Mr. REEVES.—“And ten times the number!” Well, I will take the honourable gentleman on that statement. In Christchurch, I fancy, when the women are on the roll, it will consist of about thirteen thousand people. I take it, if the general-election poll is like all other polls, at the outside the poll will be about 8,500; so that 4,500 people will be knocked off. But, according to my honourable friend, they will be put on again, and ten times the number; in other words, 45,000 will be put on the Christchurch roll—a fair example of the hasty, unconsidered language into which the opponents of this Bill are betrayed. I should like to see the publicans’ ring which will manage, be-

tween December and March, to put 4,500 bogus votes on the roll. Why, Sir, to do that they must corrupt the Government, they must bribe the public officials, they must hocus the whole of the prohibitionists and the whole of the “moderates”—if such infamy is to be carried on in the light of day. Why, a week after the first twenty names were put on the roll there would be such a howl as would re-echo not only in Christchurch, but throughout the whole of New Zealand. If I thought the honourable member was stating facts when he indulges in these awful prophecies I should vote with him now to stop the Bill in order to get rid of the clause. I admit the whole working of the Bill hangs on that clause. I admit, if the prophecies of those honourable gentlemen are true, the Bill will be rendered largely nugatory, and will have to be amended; and, if their friends give me a chance of voting in the direction of amending it next session, I will give them my loyal support in amending it. I admit it is an arguable question as to whether two-fifths or one-half is the proper quota to prevent a poll being void. Individually, I should have been willing that the proposal of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford) should be carried, and the one-half be reduced to two-fifths. But, however, I am satisfied that the purging of the rolls will be such as has never been seen before, and the rolls next January will consist solely of those who are able to vote. You will have a roll in Christchurch next January solely consisting of people able and willing to vote at the licensing election, and I venture to say that by March there will be very little difference in the roll. Judging by the present state of popular feeling about licensing in Christchurch, next March you will have a four-fifths vote of the people on the roll. And I venture to say that vote will be cast by a large majority in favour of a reduction. So the first result of this much-abused Bill in Christchurch may be such a reduction of publichouses within twelve months as all the friends of temperance and prohibition have not been able to bring about during the last generation. It is in that belief I support the third reading of the Bill. One honourable gentleman stated that the Bill puts a premium on publichouses—that the licensed victuallers themselves would have given a more reasonable measure. That sort of thing is not criticism, it is fantastic invective. It is not criticism, it is wild exaggeration. I venture to say, with all due deference to Sir Robert Stout, that I know more about the feelings of the licensed victuallers than he does, and that it is only because the licensed victuallers are told by the Government that either this Bill must be passed or they will get a much worse Bill that they accept the Bill at all.

Sir R. STOUT.—Who would give them a much worse Bill?

Mr. REEVES.—You and your friends would. If the whole question of licensing reform were to be blocked for six years, as the honourable gentleman is virtually asking, then I venture to say that six years hence this liquor traffic

would have expanded to such a degree that a more drastic Bill would be necessary. If this Bill were not passed, then for six years we might expect mortal conflict between the extreme prohibitionists on the one side and the brewers and publicans on the other. In the meantime the mass of the people would go to the wall. The interests of the mass of the people would be neglected; the moderates would have no voice in the question; the quantity of liquor sold in the colony would be enormously increased; the law would be evaded and laughed at wholesale; and the result would be that six or seven years hence a more drastic Bill would be necessary. But an irreparable evil would have been done, and the Bill then passed would only do what this Bill will do now. I ask honourable gentlemen not to wait—not to allow the licensing question to remain a happy hunting-ground for extremists. I do not think that is right. I think the mass of the people, who are moderates, who do not belong to either extreme, should take this question resolutely in hand and decide it on their own lines. The curse of New Zealand has been that these licensing elections have been simply duels between the extremists on either side. The mass of the moderates either have not voted at all, or have voted for the brewer under the belief that they had to do so or go the whole way for prohibition. We want to stop that. We want to bring in a new phase altogether. That phase is a substantial, right, and regular reduction—a thing that has hardly ever been seen in New Zealand before, but which, if this Bill passes, and works properly, will be seen year by year, and will clothe the whole question with a new aspect. We want to see this question cease to be a dual to the death between the Rev. Mr. Isitt and his friends on the one side and the Licensed Victuallers' Associations on the other. In order to bring about this change, I beg the House to pass this Bill. Again, it is said—and I think it is a most unworthy taunt—that those who vote for this Bill, and did not vote for the Bill that came before it, are not true Liberals. What does that mean? It means that—with one most prominent and honourable exception—almost every man who is in the forefront of Liberalism in the colony is to be branded as not a true Liberal. It means that the late Premier, who built up this great party of which we are now so proud—a party which it is to be fervently hoped will not be cleft asunder by this disturbing element—it means that the Premier now in his grave, had he been alive, would be branded as no true Liberal: because, I venture to say, from what I remember of his opinions, he would have thought this Government Bill an extreme measure. He never denied that he was in favour of fair compensation. It means that the present Minister of Lands, who is supporting this Bill, and who I should say is not only truly Liberal, but is recognised as such from one end of the colony to the other, is to be branded as no true Liberal. It means that the honourable gentleman, and

member of the Executive, Mr. Montgomery, who led this party for years in the face of great adversity, and who has always been, I venture to say, as true and faithful a Liberal as any man in New Zealand, is to be branded as no true Liberal. It means that the Premier,—who, whatever his faults may be, at any rate, no one will deny, has stood in the forefront and fought the battle of Liberalism through good and evil report for the last fifteen years,—that he is to be branded as not a true Liberal. It means that men outside the Government, men who for the last ten or twelve years have fought for our party without office or reward—men like the honourable member for Oamaru and the honourable member for East Coast, most faithful members of the Liberal party—are to be branded as not true Liberals. That taunt has been thrown out against me in Christchurch. I do not claim to be in the same high position as the gentlemen whose names I have mentioned, as compared with whom I am a man of yesterday. But this I do claim: that for the last seven years I have stood in the hottest of the fight, and fought the battle of Liberalism before the public without flinching. In the seven years before that, although I was not in public, still I fought the battle with my pen. And I ask honourable gentlemen to consider this: With one very honourable exception,—the honourable member for Inangahua,—are the leaders of the prohibitionists the men to whom the people of New Zealand would naturally turn if they were asked to point out their own leaders? Look at the Liberal legislation of the last twenty years. Has it, as a whole, been carried by gentlemen who have been prominent in the prohibitionist party? or has it been carried by the men against whom the taunt is now thrown out that they are not true Liberals? I say we have done the work: and, though the honourable member for Inangahua has done work, and though the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison), and one or two others, have stood by us and done work, I say it is, on the whole, to the supporters of this Bill, and to the man who is in his grave, Mr. Ballance, that the people of New Zealand would turn if they were asked who were the leaders of the Liberal party,—who were the true Liberals of New Zealand. And therefore I ask the people outside the House, and members in the House, to think upon that. I ask Liberals to approach this question free from bitterness. I ask them, in the battle now coming on at the general election, not to make this licensing question a disturbing element, or a means of cleaving the party in twain, but to work, as far as they can, hand in hand and shoulder to shoulder.

Mr. SANDFORD.—After the very eloquent and comprehensive speech which we have heard from the Minister I think we might come to an issue on this question, but I do not feel disposed to give a silent vote, especially in face of the fact that I suppose, of all places in New Zealand, the constituency which the Minister and his colleagues—Mr. Taylor and myself—

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represent is the most perturbed in regard to this liquor question. Honourable members will no doubt have to answer to their constituents for their votes on this subject, and if there are any who are sure to be called upon to do so it is we, the three members for Christchurch City. I may say, in approaching this subject, that I do not think the Premier has quite fulfilled the pledge he gave the House when he said he would bring down a Bill which would please all parties. I, however, congratulate him upon not having fulfilled that promise. Had he brought down a Bill which would have pleased all parties—the extreme liquor party and the extreme temperance party—I should have said that such Bill was useless. The mere fact that both the liquor party and the extreme temperance party have abused the Government is in itself, to my mind, one of the strongest arguments in favour of the Bill. There are in it two or three weak points, to which I wish to refer. I consider that the Minister—and he knows my opinion on the subject—has made a very grave mistake in inserting the three-years-license clause. Up to the present time it has been recognised that a man who kept his house as it should be kept almost invariably received a continuance of his license, but it has never before been given expression to on the statute-book. I do hope even now that in another place this clause will be struck out. Another weak clause is that which provides for one-half of the electors on the roll voting. On this point I think the Premier might fairly have given way and accepted my amendment: not that, personally, I have any fear of the vote falling through; but placing the limit at a lower proportion would have removed any cause for fear, and disarmed much opposition. I believe there will be sufficient interest throughout the country to secure a proper poll being taken, especially with the thoroughly-purged rolls. I was certainly surprised to hear the honourable member for Selwyn make the statement that the bulk of the roll would be doubled and quadrupled, between the time of the general election and the licensing election, by the addition of fresh names. The Minister, I think, fairly reduced the honourable member's contention to an absurdity. I should like to point out, regarding this question of three-year licenses, that the Alliance party themselves have, to some extent, recognised that the liquor interest has some claim to compensation. I suppose the Alliance and the extreme party will be horrified when they are told that such is the case. I have only to draw attention to this fact: that the Rev. Mr. Walker's Alcoholic Veto Bill provided for some seventeen months' notice being given to the publican in the shape of time compensation before the vote should take effect. The honourable member for Inangahua, in bringing forward one of his Bills—the Direct Veto Bill—made a similar provision. Such provisions as these show that the proposers think that, while there is no legal right, there is some moral right to compensation or consideration. I deny absolutely that there is any legal claim. Before

coming to this House I did not pose as a champion of the extreme temperance party, and I think the liquor party will hardly regard me as their champion. The honourable member for Manukau referred to the fact that, while this Bill has been before the House, sometimes I have voted with the liquor party and sometimes on the side of the prohibitionists. My action may be accounted for by this: that I distinctly declined to be led or dictated to by either section. Before approaching the subject I laid out for myself a definite line of action, which was, to do what I held to be in the best interests of all parties concerned; so on this Bill I have sometimes voted with the honourable member for Inangahua and sometimes I have been directly opposed to him. For my votes and action here I am prepared to answer to my constituents. I believe that the majority of the people are not extreme prohibitionists, nor are they supporters of the liquor party. I believe the majority desire that the licensing-laws shall be amended. They wish to have the power of reducing the number of licenses, and of ultimately abolishing them altogether if they so desire. That power is given to them by this Bill; and if it should prove that my support of this measure means political death—and of this some of my friends are quite certain—at least I shall meet that fate with the assurance that I have done what I believed to be right, irrespective of the extremists on either side of the question. Exception has been taken to the three-fifths majority to carry total prohibition, but in this respect I am inclined to think the honourable member for Inangahua has been somewhat inconsistent. Reference was made the other night to the fact that in 1876 the honourable member agreed to a two-thirds majority; and his reply was to the effect that in those days he was prepared to take what he could get; and yet, forsooth! because some of us choose to accept what we can get, we are told in the first place that we are "Mr. Face-both-ways," and in the second place that we are under the thumb of the liquor party. I was certainly surprised that a gentleman occupying the position of the honourable member for Inangahua should have so spoken of those who stood by him on the second reading of his Bill, and who gave him the votes which forced this question on the Government. If a two-thirds majority in 1876 was, upon the admission of the honourable member for Inangahua, a moderate and reasonable majority, surely, taking into consideration the advance in public opinion, a three-fifths—or, virtually, a three-tenths—majority of the entire number of electors on the roll is a reasonable majority to-day. I think it should not be lost sight of that the Bill provides for a three-fifths majority of the half of the electors—that is, in reality, a three-tenths of the whole. I say these provisions are of an extremely Liberal character. Exception has also been taken to the size of the licensing districts. The Alliance people, however, are in favour of the electoral districts.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. SANDFORD.—Is it disputed? I will

prove it. Not long since the Alliance furnished each member of the House with a paper read by Mr. Bell at their Convention, and I take it that, in supplying honourable members with that address, the Alliance indorsed the statements made by that gentleman.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—They stated so to me, deliberately.

Mr. SANDFORD.—Mr. Bell writes on this subject as follows:—

“Therefore convenience and justice are met by the present proposal that the country shall be divided into licensing districts coterminous with the districts appointed for the return of members to Parliament, and that in each district the persons qualified to exercise the parliamentary franchise shall be the electors to deal with the question whether licenses to sell liquor shall or shall not be granted within their district.”

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear—but not to elect Committees.

Mr. SANDFORD.—This is the stand taken up by the Alliance and by the Bill introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua. This is the stand taken up by the Political Committee of the Sydenham Prohibition League, members of which, as I mentioned in Committee, waited upon me and insisted upon the districts being the electoral districts.

Sir R. STOUT.—No.

Mr. SANDFORD.—What I am now stating really happened in my own case, when deputations waited upon me with the distinct object of preventing the cutting-up of Sydenham. I wired to the Government on the subject, and I have the Government's reply, and in due course I shall see that the communications are made public. Electoral districts were demanded, as I have said.

Sir R. STOUT.—May I explain? In my Bill, as well as in that the Alliance demanded, they asked for a vote on Licenses or No licenses in electoral districts; but so far as the election of Committees was concerned, it was to remain with the licensing districts as now constituted.

Mr. SANDFORD.—I should like to point out that the direct-veto poll is to be upon the larger districts. That is the most important poll. The Licensing Committees are only administrative bodies, and can have little effect on the result of the poll. The most important proceeding is not the election of the Licensing Committee, but the direct-veto poll. The veto question, I hold, is the most important thing that is submitted to the people, as upon that poll depends whether there is to be a reduction in the number of licenses or the total extinction of licensed houses. The election of the Committee is still to be by a bare majority, and, if there is anything like a temperance sentiment in the constituency, that temperance sentiment should have no difficulty in electing a Committee that will carry out to the fullest extent the wish of the electors that the proportion of licenses should be reduced, and that there should be stringent action in regard to breaches of the law. If there is any appreciable tem-

perance sentiment in a constituency, it should have no difficulty by a bare majority in getting what may be called a reduction Committee, if not a prohibition Committee, elected. Therefore the size of the district from which the Committee is elected is quite immaterial as compared with the size of the district where the direct-veto poll is taken. Now, I strongly assert that the temperance party did ask most distinctly for the electoral district as the district over which the licensing poll is to be taken: the Committee is a secondary consideration. Referring again for one moment to the honourable member for Inangahua and his speech on the measure which he introduced in 1876, it may be as well, perhaps, that I should hansomise his remarks on that occasion. In speaking on the second reading of the Bill, he says,—

“He did not desire that the measure should be passed in its entirety, without alteration, and would be prepared to concede that, instead of a majority having the power to prevent licenses being issued, an amendment should be agreed to providing that it should require two-thirds, as under ‘The Licensing Act, 1873.’”

Later on, the honourable gentleman made this remark:—

“If the colony ever came to a decision that, should two-thirds of the people desire the prohibition of the sale of liquor, their desire should be allowed to take effect, then he was afraid the Colonial Treasurer would have to look for some other source of revenue, and there would have to be a change in the incidence of taxation.”

I think the remarks of the honourable gentleman on that occasion clearly indicated—and, in fact, he himself in one part of his speech made use of the statement—that a two-thirds majority was really a reasonable majority—not to cancel the licenses already in existence, but to prevent any new licenses. If this two-thirds majority was a reasonable majority when no vested interests existed, how much more must the three-fifths majority be a reasonable majority when there are very large interests at stake! I contend that, making allowance for the alteration in popular opinion which has taken place in the meantime, the three-fifths majority is a very fair compromise on the part of the Government. I think, myself, that the provision for the half-vote is a mistake—not, as I have remarked, that I personally fear its influence, but very much opposition would have been disarmed if it had not been insisted on. What was the fact in the last Sydenham licensing election? It may interest honourable members to know that at that election for the Licensing Committee two-thirds of the total number of ratepayers voted.

Sir R. STOUT.—What were the numbers?

Mr. SANDFORD.—The number was 1,061 out of a total available vote of 1,580; and this was for the election of a Committee. As we now have it, one-half the electors must vote; in that case they had, with a poll of two-thirds of the

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possible number of voters, a Committee elected which was avowedly a Prohibition Committee. With such rolls as we shall have when this Bill comes into force—rolls purged as we may expect them to be next year—I have not the slightest fear but that one-half of the electors will go to the poll. I am convinced of this: that the liquor party will not dare to abstain from voting. Still, if the Premier had accepted my proposal for the two-fifths proportion it would have had the effect of almost entirely disarming opposition in this respect. At any rate, I believe the moderate temperance party are satisfied. But the extreme temperance party, who are admittedly not satisfied, lose sight of this fact: that under the Bill as it is now before the House the issue of new licenses is practically prohibited for the next fifteen, if not twenty, years. Before any new licenses can be issued there are four obstacles to be overcome. In the first place, no new licenses can be issued until after the next census. There must then be an increase of 25 per cent. in the population. One-half of the electors must go to the poll, and three-fifths of the voters must vote in favour of the issue of new licenses, before any can be granted. The Bill is most consistent in saying that, while a substantial majority is required before all existing licenses can be withdrawn, there must also be a substantial majority before any new licenses can be granted. I think the Government have been entirely consistent in that respect, although I may have decided against them in some other directions. Now, Sir, I have been requested to read a letter I have received from the chairman of a public meeting held at Christchurch. I wish in this matter to be entirely fair to both sides on the question before the House and the country. I strongly protest against the line of action pursued by some of the extreme temperance advocates,—from whom we were entitled to expect better things,—in suppressing, or failing to make themselves fully acquainted with, the full facts regarding this question. I have no wish to follow them in such a course. I have received this letter:—

“Christchurch, 28th August, 1893.

“DEAR SIR,—As chairman of a public meeting held in the Tuam-street Hall in this city last evening to consider the Government Licensing Bill, I have to advise you that the following resolutions were unanimously carried, amid much enthusiasm on the part of the large audience which crowded the building: First, ‘That this meeting enters its emphatic protest against the unseemly haste exhibited by the Government in rushing their Licensing Bill through the House.’ Second, ‘That this meeting is strongly of opinion that the principles embodied in the Bill are anti-democratic, and calculated to render all effort for temperance reform futile for many years, and urges the Government to abandon the Bill, and refer the question to the people for their decision at the approaching election.’ In view of the keen interest evinced in the question, will you kindly read these resolutions to the House

before a vote is taken upon the third reading of the Bill?—I am, &c.,

“GEORGE J. SMITH.

“Mr. E. Sandford, M.H.R., Wellington.”

I hope my temperance friends will not accuse me of suppressing any part of the evidence they have furnished. Now, as a friend of the temperance movement, my position is this: I believe that by this measure we are giving the people an advantage; and, while I admit that there is a grave blot—a three-year license, providing that the poll does not go against them, to owners of existing houses—I am not prepared to throw away, for that reason, what good there is in the Bill. I am going to take the Bill as the best I can get; but I take it with the understanding that, either in the House or out of the House, I shall come again, hat in hand, to secure amendment if it proves faulty in its working. I think that to refuse what is offered because one cannot get all that one requires is a very short-sighted policy: that is my view at present; and I believe that I am acting in the interests of the entire temperance party, of which I am a sincere, although moderate, friend, in securing what is offered by the Bill.

Mr. EARNshaw.—I think the House listened, and certainly I myself listened, with intense interest to the fencing and defensive speech of the Minister of Labour on this question. That speech was remarkable in many respects; and I would bring under the notice of the Licensed Victuallers' Association the fact that it would be well for them if they dropped their present champion, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), and took up in his place the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Reeves). I think they would gain by the exchange, for I say, undoubtedly, his speech to-night is the ablest speech in defence of the liquor traffic we have heard during this debate. Now, the honourable gentleman endeavoured, in a whirl and swirl of words, to do an amount of skit-dancing around this question so as to delude one into believing that the Government Bill and the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua rested on entirely the same basis; and, Sir, in his endeavour to hoodwink the House he not only took us around the referendum principles of Switzerland, and tried to entrap the honourable member for Selwyn, but he also took us back to ancient Greece in order to show us that in the democracy of Greece the putting of questions directly to the people brought down that democracy. Now, Sir, he tried to show us that even the country which produced Socrates, the men who walked with Plato and who understood the art of Phidias, broke down their democracy by submitting these questions directly to the people. Now, I say it was no such thing that brought down the democracy of Greece, and nobody knows it better than the honourable gentleman. He certainly must know ancient history well enough to be aware that that which brought down the democracy of Greece, and that which brought down the Republic of

Rome later on, and that which, much earlier, brought down the dynasties of Egypt and Babylon, was the founding of those empires on a basis of slavery, and the raising-up of an effete aristocracy by means of the wealth produced in consequence of the existence of slavery in those countries; and it was not in consequence of trusting the people to decide these issues that those Powers of the past broke down. And what has nearly led to the breaking-down of the democracies of the present day is simply that the people have not been directly trusted enough; and it is only by realising the fact that, in any of these colonies, we must go more directly to the people than we have done in the past that our younger democracies can hope to succeed. If it is correct for the Minister of Labour to state that the decision of a bare majority on any question is illiberal and not democratic, then, I say, the question of principle is carried out, even if you give it to a two-thirds, a three-fifths, or a seven-eighths majority; the principle is absolutely the same. The honourable gentleman has tried to delude and mislead the House on that point. His whole speech bristled throughout as a defensive speech. It appeared as if he saw a spectre before him, and he made a most masterly attempt to defend the Government. Now, Sir, he said he did not believe in parish prohibition. Well, neither do I, if you are going to allow the question of finance to come into this question. And I venture to state this: that, in spite of the Government Bill, or any other Bill—the honourable member for Inangahua's, or the Direct Veto Bill—until the Government of the day grapples with the question of local finance, and controls the sources of supply, you have not got to the crux of the liquor-traffic question; and when we come to a true solution of that question it will be found that the Government will not only have to take the administration of the matter, but they will have to carry the full burden upon their own shoulders, and in some other measure give relief to districts for the revenue they take away from them. I should not have risen to speak on this question, because I know that no speeches are going to change a single vote; every man has made up his mind how he is going to vote. My mind has been made up from the very commencement. But, Sir, I speak very feelingly upon this question, because I am one of those who believe, with the other representatives of labour in England, America, and in the colonies, that if the Liberal party are to succeed, in this or any other country in the world, they have first of all to grapple with the drink question; and, no matter what other measures of reform we put upon the statute-book, until the workers have got this drink question under their hand we are powerless before the capitalists of the world; and I think the leaders of the labour parties are thoroughly alive to this question. At Home we have Mann, Tillet, and Burns; and in America the labour party, gloriously led by Powderley, of the Knights of Labour—the

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whole of them in the forefront in believing that this question must be grappled with, and that it is crucial to the issues of labour; and I hope that on this night the whole of the labour party will keep as they have kept right through this Parliament, and go into the lobby determined that they will have a full and proper measure of reform upon this question. I regret that there will be, for the first time in the history of this Parliament, a division among the labour members on this question; no one in this House more regrets that than I do. Honourable gentlemen know that I have some views of my own upon this question, and that I have not pleased either party; but I venture to state that, until there is a Bill before this House that is uniform in its application, and deals with every publican in New Zealand alike, not giving in one district a monopoly to one and in another spoliation, but taking the licenses from every publican—until a clear decision is taken in every district in New Zealand as to whether the people want liquor sold therein or not,—and with the question of local revenue entirely eliminated from it,—until that is reached, I say, we shall have no final solution of this question. The Minister of Labour said it might be considered a nuisance, if not an impertinence, to discuss the measure on its third reading, and not upon its second. In this House it has become the custom not to discuss measures before they go to Committee, but afterwards; and I think it is an undesirable innovation. While I have joined in it, for purposes quite apparent to members of the Opposition, still I think it is not fair, when the Government have adopted this course right through, to lecture the House with regard to not debating the question fully on the second reading. We had no reason to debate this Bill largely on the second reading, because the Bill could be so amended in Committee as to suit the needs and requirements for the present of the temperance party; and it was in the hope that this Bill would be so amended in Committee that honourable members, all round, refrained from discussing it at any length upon the second reading. Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman also referred to the small advance in liquor legislation that was going on at Home, and he referred to the two-thirds vote that is in Harcourt's Bill, which practically dealt with drinking-bars. The Minister of Labour should have been the last man in this House to make any such comparison. Why, Sir, he is leading the section who declare that we are far in advance of the old countries of Europe,—that our labour legislation is far in advance of that of any other country. Who would think of bringing in our Conciliation and Arbitration Bill at Home? And, also, who would bring in the social legislation that has been introduced in this Parliament with regard to the working-classes? So, I say, we can reasonably look upon it as a fact that we are as much in advance of the Old Country upon this great question of the liquor traffic. I will now pass by the honourable gentleman. I think he has made a masterly defence

of the Government, and of the views that he has stood by. At the same time, I say now, quietly, that the remarks that I made on the Financial Statement have been amply borne out through the whole lines of this debate. Now, Sir, I wish to make a few remarks with regard to the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish). He said that the honourable member for Inangahua was obstructing business, and dragging members across the floor of this House time after time, facing such majorities as fifty to thirteen, and so on. He made another remark the other night to this effect: that we did not know when we were beaten. Well, Sir, that has been the proud boast of Britons through ages,—that we have not known when we were beaten; and I say we are not beaten to-night. The victory of the Government is just equal to Napoleon's Austerlitz—another such victory might lead them to defeat. To-night the division may be against those who are fighting this question of going deliberately to the people for a decision upon it; but, though beaten to-night, this victory of the Government is but their Austerlitz. Our Waterloo will be next December; and I venture to say that, whether this Bill goes through the Upper House or not, this question will have to be faced in the large centres. The question will be, "Are you in favour of the liquor traffic, or are you in favour of the prohibition of it?" and I can assure the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) that he shall have his wish gratified; and that, as he stands on the side of liquor, I shall stand on the side of temperance, and we shall see who comes out the victor. Now, Sir, he also made a reference to honourable members on this side of the House—a reference that I think was an impertinence, and which certainly should not be used by any member of this House. He said, "It is all very well for members to talk in this House who have not a shilling to jingle on a tombstone." Well, Sir, I have yet to learn that it is necessary that a man, to be able to represent his fellow-men, or to be able to write a book, or to be able to gather in a knowledge of the past and of the world of nature, should own money. I say if you look over the wide world to-day you will find those men who are the thinkers and brain-workers of to-day are practically poor men. But, if we are to be taunted in this way, it should be by a man who himself is pure, who, perhaps, stands in a high monetary position; but I say to taunt men in this House on their poverty comes with a bad grace from a man when he cannot say that throughout his life he has paid twenty shillings in the pound. A man who on several occasions has compromised with his creditors is not the man to taunt any men on their poverty.

Mr. McLEAN.—I rise to a point of order. I think honourable members should not refer to the private affairs of any member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Quite right. The honourable member ought not to have made the re-

mark he has made with regard to the financial position of another honourable member.

Sir R. STOUT.—Then, I ask, Sir, was the honourable member for Dunedin City in order in referring to the fact that I had shares in a certain company?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman ought not to have done that, but my attention was not drawn to it at the time: and the circumstance which has now occurred is still more objectionable. A member is entitled to hold shares in any company he likes.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I wish to be within the finer courtesies of the House—

Mr. McLEAN.—Withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER.—They are not words of a nature to demand withdrawal.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I am trying to show that a man should be pure before he casts stones. But the position the honourable member for Dunedin City occupied, and occupies now, is not one to give him the privilege of casting stones at any man in this House because of his monetary position. That is what I wished to bring out, and I think I am quite in order in doing so. Now, the honourable gentleman, in a speech remarkable for ingenuity, tried to lead this House to believe, and after this House the country, that he did not know how he was going to vote. Why, Sir, have we not had this scene enacted on the floor of this House for the last two or three days? What did it mean? It meant this: that clause after clause moved by those who are really fighting on the side of the licensed victuallers was accepted by the Premier; and I ask the House and the country, what amendment in this Bill was accepted coming from an honourable member fighting on the side of temperance? Not one. Therefore we can clearly say that this battle has been fought on the side of the licensed victuallers, and I say the Government will yet have to face the consequences at the election. The honourable member for Masterton said the honourable member for Inangahua had forced the Government to take this matter up. The honourable member for Inangahua did no such thing. Indeed, the contrary is rather the position, for the Premier practically challenged the House, by saying that if it gave the honourable member for Inangahua a substantial majority on his Bill the Government would bring in a Bill. That was a challenge to the House, practically, not to support the honourable member for Inangahua's Bill, because they knew then it meant facing these lobbies with a Government majority behind them: and, so far from his forcing the Government to take up his Bill, the Government jumped at taking it up themselves. I question whether, when that statement was made, they believed there would be the substantial vote on the honourable member for Inangahua's Bill that was recorded. In fact, events in which I was made somewhat of a culprit clearly showed that men who are supporting the Government would not be allowed to have the courage of their own opinions on that occasion. Now, Sir, the leader of the Opposition

made one remark which I thoroughly agree with: in fact, he made two. The first one was, that the Bill had been hurried through the House. I think it has been hurried in an unseemly way through the House. The honourable member for Wanganui admitted that he himself had voted in one lobby when he was on the other side. He made a statement, which was echoed throughout the House, that a considerable number more had done the same thing; and I think they have, although I do not think they did not know which lobby they were going into. I say, in connection with this Bill, that the impress it bears upon it is that it has been unduly forced through by the Government.

Mr. TAYLOR.—No.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Then, if the honourable member for Christchurch City says "No" to that, will he say "No" to the next point? The leader of the Opposition said that the country will expect members to speak with no uncertain sound on this question.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I agree with that; I always do that.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I say that, in the vote shortly to be taken, the country will expect every man to cast his vote as he means to fight it out at the next election; and I trust that every honourable member, no matter on which side he casts his vote, will be able to go to the electors with a light heart upon that occasion. There is a point I should like to bring before the Government, and it is this: Of course I am utterly opposed to this Bill, because of the principle in the last paragraph in clause 15, in which it is demanded that half the people on the roll shall record their votes before the poll shall be declared valid. I have had something to do, in my time, with elections and rolls, and I know what it means. At the same time, I am well aware that rolls are stuffed: and to-day the female franchise has been carried in the other Chamber by two. I do not know, but I am still of opinion that the women of New Zealand will not get their votes for the coming election. I have stated that in the recess, and I have said it right up to now, and I say it notwithstanding the record given in the Upper House to-day, —that the women of New Zealand will not have an opportunity of recording their votes at the ensuing election.

Mr. TAYLOR.—How do you know?

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Well, if the honourable gentleman will keep quiet, I will tell him this. It was not by "spying." Even if this female franchise becomes law, I will ask the honourable gentleman if this is a fact, and I am making an assertion that it is: If you take the electorates throughout New Zealand, there is not much more than half of those on the rolls who can record their votes. Honourable members know this to be a fact: that half of the women, in some districts, will not be able to get to the polls. Take, for instance, the district of the honourable member for Wakatipu: do you mean to say that half the women in that electorate could get to the poll? And what will it mean? I say that in this respect

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the Bill is a sham and a delusion, and no one knows that better than the leader of the Liberal party.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why did you support it last year?

Mr. EARNSHAW.—I supported the women's franchise, and you must now give them electoral rights and privileges the same as you give to travellers and others. There is no logical stopping-place till you get to electoral rights. That is the position I take up, and I shall be one in this House who, now that travellers and others have been given electoral rights, will vote for those rights being extended to every one in New Zealand. I cannot see the liberality of the Government when it steps in between one class and another. I would ask the Government this: If the women's franchise is not carried into law, are they going to disfranchise the women who now have the right, on this question of licensing, in Dunedin at the present time? In Dunedin there are practically four hundred women who have a right to give a vote now on this question. I ask, are they going to disfranchise them, by not passing the Electoral Bill? I say it is a step backwards. I regret that the Premier has seen his way to bring in this Bill, for I feel sure that had he taken the advice I tendered to him he would have been in a proper position at the present time, and he would have embarrassed neither the supporters of the Government nor of the Opposition when they went to the country. If he had brought before this House, not a Bill that would please neither party, but a thorough-going Bill, and said to this House, "I want you to pass its second reading, and then when we go to the country if we come back strong enough we will carry it into law," the question could then be threshed out at the elections, and we could have had some finality on this question. I have very little more to say, but I should like to make a quotation. Quotations have been made once or twice to-night from Mr. Gladstone; and this is what Mr. Gladstone says: "The diminution of the revenue from drink goes side by side with an increase and extension of the saving habits of the people." That is the crux of the whole liquor question, inasmuch as, with regard to this question of the drink traffic, if the expenditure upon drink were reduced it would mean money to the labouring-classes, and would enable them to come into competition with those who employ them. Here is another quotation, from one of the greatest drink-producers England has ever had, and that is Mr. Charles Burton. He says,—

"Drunkenness is one of the most dreadful of all the manifold and frightful evils which afflict the British Isles; and the worst of plagues. The intellectual, the moral, and the religious welfare of the people, their material comforts, their domestic happiness, are all involved. The question is, whether millions of our countrymen shall be helped to become happier and wiser; whether pauperism, lunacy, disease, and crime shall be diminished; whether multitudes of men, women, and children shall

be aided to escape from the ruin of body and soul."

These are two statements from two very distinguished men, and are quite sufficient to be a bulwark to those who are determined to fight this battle to the bitter end in this House and on the hustings. I say that I shall go back to my constituents on this question with a light heart, and I feel sure that the people of Dunedin believe that in endeavouring to block this Bill from going into law I have done so in the best interests of the people and in the interests of democracy.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to make a personal explanation. The Minister of Labour, as well as the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Sandford), alluded to my Local Option Bill of 1876, which they said provided for a two-thirds majority. I think I am right in that.

Mr. REEVES.—I beg your pardon; I did not.

Sir R. STOUT.—You referred to a Bill introduced by me as providing for two-thirds.

Mr. REEVES.—I was talking of Mr. Gladstone's Bill.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to explain that my Bill, by section 13, provided that the question, License or No license, should be determined by an absolute majority of votes. Section 13 of the Bill is here, and can be seen. What I did say, in introducing the Bill, was that, if I could get a law which provided for the two-thirds being maintained as it was in the existing Act, I was willing to accept that. But my Bill, as introduced, was for a bare majority.

Mr. SEDDON.—That was a ratepayers' vote.

Sir R. STOUT.—Of course, on a ratepayers' vote.

Mr. REEVES.—I should like to have it recorded by the reporter that I never made any reference to the honourable gentleman at all. I should not have thought it in the least degree relevant to this as to whether a Bill that was introduced, say, seventeen or eighteen years ago, had a two-thirds clause in it. It would be quite pardonable, I consider, for the honourable gentleman to have changed his opinion since that time.

Sir R. STOUT.—The Bill only provided for a bare majority.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I cannot say I am satisfied with the Bill, or that I can look upon it as finally and satisfactorily dealing with the question; but I may say this: that the House has stultified itself with regard to this Bill. Some of the best features have been taken out of it. But I am not, like many honourable gentlemen in this House, anxious to see absolute prohibition carried in this country, and least of all am I anxious to see it carried out without compensation. I approved of the clause giving compensation, but I rose to my feet more particularly on account of some remarks of the leader of the Opposition and also of the Minister of Justice. I think they alike misunderstood the question of reference to the people and veto in the Bill. The leader of the Opposi-

tion said that he distrusted the people, and that he thought the direct veto of the people could not be trusted; and he added that this House was the voice of the people. Well, can we say that this House is the voice of the people, when it only represents the choice of a little more than half the people? The system of election is such that we here cannot claim to represent all the people. We are personally the choice of a section of the people, but certainly we cannot claim to represent even that part on any particular question. I think that beyond argument. It is impossible to suppose that the people can issue authority or instructions as to their views on every question. We in this House assume exclusive functions which we were never intended to exercise. We are advised to set aside the plain authority of those who sent us here; and if we are to believe the honourable gentleman, the leader of the Opposition, our authority is superior to that of the electors. When representative institutions were first formed they were simply a makeshift, because it gave those who could not attend mass meetings a means of approving by proxy; consequently the first meetings were a mixture of representatives and constituents; and the representatives were instructed for definite purposes and one meeting. Now members are chosen only by a moiety of the electors, and act almost entirely upon their own volition, and decide what they shall sanction or refuse assent to. Now we are told that the voice of this House is the voice of the electors of the country. When this House appoints a Committee to inquire into any matter, is the voice of that Committee the voice of this House? Certainly not. We can indorse their report or not: and that is the principle we ought to follow in regard to our constituents. But the Hon. the Minister of Justice does not seem to know that he is going further in the direction of the referendum by this Bill giving the veto than any proposal in the Referendum Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—It is the other way about.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I wish to show the honourable gentleman where he is entirely mistaken. The effect of this Bill is to give the people the power of dealing on their own motion with the question, absolutely without reference of any kind—which is the necessity in the referendum: to insure this, a question is referred to the people, to say whether they will accept it or not.

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable gentleman misunderstood me. I spoke in complimentary terms of the referendum by comparison, from what we know of it, with the direct veto.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I quite misunderstood. I did not think the honourable gentleman was in favour of the referendum. I understand now that the honourable gentleman says that the referendum is better in its effect than this Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—Yes.

Mr. O'CONOR.—I am very glad to hear the honourable gentleman say so; but it would have been more satisfactory if he had said so when the question was discussed the other day, and if he had voted for the referendum. The

difference is simply this: The referendum provides that after a question has been discussed and decided favourably, it is then referred to the people for final approval or rejection. In this Bill the reference to the people is final also, but the subject has not previously been discussed and approved by the representatives. Still, it has the redeeming feature that we have at last decided that we will leave this question to the people. And, Sir, when we leave questions to the people absolutely to be decided without the interference of this House at all, we ought to have safeguards. If Government decide to impose safeguards, they should be such as to guard against hasty, ill-considered, or impulsive action. In my opinion it would be a most dangerous thing in a democracy such as ours not to impose some safeguards. I can very well see that there might be an enthusiastic and eloquent leader like the honourable member for Inangahua, and he might be able to lead the whole side of the country with him by his speeches, but afterwards there might be reason for regret. To my mind, it is absolutely necessary that there should be some restraint. I think the provisions in the present Bill are very fair and very reasonable. The three-fifths majority is, I think, a fair majority, when you consider the result of such a vote, and how it might be used unthinkingly, as there is no previous discussion by a deliberative Assembly. That is where the difference lies between this principle and the principle of referendum. It is put to the representatives, discussed, and then left to the people to settle. As there are a great many persons engaged in the liquor trade with the sanction of the law, I think we ought to safeguard this action, and see that the vote is not taken in such a way as to be exercised by a bare majority only. I am sorry that the Bill as it is has dealt unequally with those engaged in the liquor traffic. Its dealings are most unequal: but it has been passed by Parliament. The way in which the owner of a publichouse is made liable when he might not be blamable, and is made to bear the whole loss of having the license taken away, is not a reasonable provision. At the same time, no means is left to him to safeguard his own interest by resuming possession. I think this an injustice, and a very flagrant injustice. The term is not too strong to apply to it. Then, there is another thing. While we deal with publichouses in this way, we allow the clubs to carry on really the same business as the publichouses without check or control. This is a great mistake, and I think the House has stultified itself by agreeing to such conditions. Some of the votes given on this occasion ought to be questioned, and I think the action of those honourable members who supported the provision regarding clubs ought to be deprecated. I see no reason why the votes of those honourable members should not be excluded, as they are interested in these clubs. They should not have been allowed to vote.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the brewers' votes?

Mr. O'Connor

Mr. O'CONNOR.—The brewers are no more interested in that particular question than any of the members of clubs. I say that all members of clubs who voted on that particular occasion were interested. Brewers might be interested in other parts of the Bill, or they might not. I do not raise that question just now. There are several matters in connection with the working of the measure upon which I have my misgivings. I think that the working machinery might be very well improved in its operation; but, in view of the guarantee the Premier has given us with regard to the expense, I feel somewhat relieved. And I am glad to hear that no greater charge will be thrown on local bodies than they bear at present for carrying out the election of Licensing Committees. I do not wish to point out any further what I think will prove to be defects in the Act, and I hope we shall all be here next year to improve it if any defects are then shown to exist.

Mr. PINKERTON.—Sir, I have not spoken before on this matter, but I think this is one of those questions it is not right to give a silent vote upon. I wish now to state my own impressions with regard to it. I now hold very decided opinions with regard to the liquor traffic, and I wish to express those opinions. My opinion has been all along that this liquor traffic is one which it is right to place under the control of the people. That being so, the question remains, What is a proper control over it? I have always held the opinion that the proper control was the control of the people, and in that way I have sketched out to my own satisfaction—and I think it has been approved by many others—that the best control is to provide large districts, so that the votes taken in these districts may be a full expression of opinion, and not a mere catch-vote. A vote might be influenced by some temperance reformers, or be the result of some personal influence; and that is one of the reasons why I have decided in favour of large districts, and of large Committees, because in a large district we should have a large Committee, and men would be elected over a wider range of country than at present, and would be able to do their duty entirely free from local prejudice. They would be able to give an opinion as to the closing of hotels, and in case of any dispute they would not be prejudiced as they would be if they were merely elected in a small district. We have found that the members of Licensing Committees elected on the present Committees have very strong prejudices, and are constantly deterred from reducing the number of licenses or enforcing their opinions by fear of local consequences. If these members were elected over a large area, they would be able to do their duty without fear or favour. And, in connection with this matter, I should like to mention a few remarks made by the Minister of Labour. He said it was wrong to send legislation from this House, and afterwards to take the opinion of the people of the colony upon it. I do not think it is wrong in this case, because the Bill leaves it to a

majority of three-fifths; and, if it is wrong to ask the people of the country now to give their vote upon this question, it is equally wrong to say that the minority of the country only shall really deal with it. I think that no wrong exists, and, if any wrong has been done, the Bill provides that we shall have these large districts, and therefore we shall have a larger range for the election of Committees. I have always held and I still hold that it is not fair to leave a question of this kind to the ratepayers only. I think the electors are entitled to vote on this very important question, and I have always held that a majority in number only should be obtained before the Act is carried out. I would only say, Sir, that I think, under the system of the electors settling this matter, there will be a power of discrimination which will have a good effect. Supposing, in a large district, the electors vote that a reduction shall take place. The Committee should have no power to deal with it beyond the first question. If the electors decide that there must be a reduction, the reduction must take place, and the Committee must decide at once what reduction shall be made. That, in my opinion, is wrong. The Committee should be able to determine the number annually for each of the three years. Supposing they decide to reduce the number of hotels by three, they must reduce that number at once, or the licenses for these three houses must be granted for another three years. In such a case the Committee should be able to close, if they chose, say one house each year—a course which might be fair to the holders of licenses and to the public generally. I think a very objectionable feature of the Bill, and a chief objection, is that contained in the latter part of clause 15. I can never understand why the person who does not go to the poll should be allowed a privilege over the person who does vote, and that by merely abstaining from voting he should confirm a license for three years. That is one reason, but it is not the worst. We have been told that there is no warm feeling when a vote is taken in a country district; but I think there is very great fear that the votes might not be taken. Supposing a vote is taken in favour of there being no licenses for three years, there may be persons who will refrain from going to the poll, as many do at the present licensing elections. And this is not by the vote of the people, but by people refraining from voting; and this, I think, is one of the most objectionable features in the Bill. Take this as an instance: Suppose nearly but not quite one-half of the electors, or rather of the names on the roll, vote, what may the absence of the remaining half mean? Consider this apart from roll-stuffing, of which we have heard something. A portion of the absent half may be in prison or in a lunatic asylum, may be absent from the colony or dead: yet this fraction of the whole decide the licenses for three years or more—indeed, may make them continuous. Now, we have been told that no such thing will happen—that no poll would be void because of there being

no vote—that the publicans will take care to come to the vote. If this is the case, what is the object of putting it in the Bill? If no poll is going to be void, if we are perfectly sure that these people will come and record their votes, this portion of the Bill need not be there. We have also been told that it is a great power to place in the hands of six hundred out of ten thousand people to take away property. But if the owners of property choose not to come to vote it is certainly their fault if the property is taken away. What would it be if the principle were applied to this House? Let every member who goes away and does not record his vote have greater power to enforce legislation than members who come and sit the whole night and record their votes in a proper way. The persons who do not vote are those who have the power, and the persons who do vote, unless they vote in certain numbers, are perfectly powerless. And by refraining from doing what I consider their duty these persons can inflict a hardship on the country which no absentee ought to have the power of doing. Of course, it is too late now; but I think no Committee should be put in the position of being forced to grant all the licenses at once. We have also been told—I think by the Minister of Labour—that the publicans do not want this Bill,—that they will accept this Bill merely for fear of getting something worse. Now, we have it admitted by an honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) that the publicans are being placed in a better position than under the present Act. He went over the Bill in detail, and gave several instances, such as security of tenure and other things. Well, I think no honourable member is better able to speak the mind of the liquor party than the honourable member, and I would take his opinion on this subject before that of the Minister of Labour.

Mr. REEVES.—In most respects it is worse for them.

Mr. PINKERTON.—The Bill is for them in several instances. It gives them a fixity of tenure which they had not before. This security of tenure would not have been so great had the Committee retained their powers, but the powers of the Committee are taken away. The powers of absentees are increased; and, between the two—one side having lost power, and the other gaining it by remaining away from the poll—it simply makes the license a continuous affair instead of an annual one. It offers a premium to roll-stuffing with all its attendant evils. I shall, for these reasons, vote against the third reading of the Bill.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, at this late hour of the evening I have only a few words to say on this Bill. Its history in the House has been short, and, if it is ever placed on the statute-book, I venture to predict that it will have a very short history there too. The Bill was said to be one that would please everybody. The newspapers are evidence that it does not please one side at any rate, and we have the evidence of the Minister of Education that it does not please the publicans. Very well, if it does not please

the publicans, are they going to vote against it? We shall see, when the division takes place, how they are going to vote. I want to know from the Minister of Education whether he calls this a direct-veto Bill. I understood from his speech that he did.

Mr. REEVES.—Hear, hear.

Mr. ALLEN.—“Hear, hear,” says the honourable gentleman. Then he went on to make some remarks about the referendum, and I understood him to say just now that he considered the referendum something better than the direct veto—that is, that the direct veto is something worse than the referendum. He has introduced a Bill with the direct veto in it. He tells us that the referendum is bad, but the direct veto is far worse. Therefore he has introduced a Bill with a clause in it with all that is possibly bad, according to his own statement.

Mr. REEVES.—I said it was bad without safeguards.

Mr. ALLEN.—We will come to the safeguards presently. Then, Sir, he referred us to the Athenian democracy. Comparing this country with the Athenian democracy! Athens, with her slaves, compared with New Zealand! I do not think I need take the comparison any further. If the honourable gentleman desires to represent a democracy that believes in slavery, for Goodness' sake let him represent it. Is this Bill any advance on our present legislation? I believe our present legislation is very much in advance of this measure, and that is the reason I shall vote against the third reading. In what sense is it an improvement on our present Act? The present law allows us to elect a Committee that has power to abolish licenses altogether in small districts, and to reduce the number of licenses; and both of these powers have been exercised. Instances can be given where both of these powers have been exercised. What will this Bill do if it becomes law? It professes to give to the people the power of direct veto as regards the abolition of licenses. But I say that power, so far as this Bill is concerned, is absolute moonshine. There never would be recorded a three-fifths vote in favour of the abolition of licenses, and therefore in this respect it is a retrograde step as regards the present law. And, with regard to the reduction of licenses, I admit that is the only decent part of the Bill: by putting together the votes in favour of abolishing and reducing licenses, the bare majority may reduce the licenses. But what is the power now? The Committee have the power to reduce the licenses, and there is no restriction on them. But read clause 16; and what does it say? It says that even now, under this Bill, the power is still to remain in the hands of the Committee; but how?—Limited to a fourth. The Committee has still to say how many licenses shall be reduced, but it is limited in executing that power to one-fourth of the existing licenses. The Committee may only reduce one out of two hundred and yet be within the law; and I say this is no advance on the present law in any respect

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whatever. Now, time after time members opposed to the third reading of the Bill have referred to two main features which are objectionable—those of the half-poll in the 15th section, and the triennial licenses. Now, why was the half-poll inserted? I wish to argue the question from the point of view of those who are arguing in favour of the half-poll. I have heard many say, “The half-poll is sure to take place: take, for instance, the poll at the general election—in nine cases out of ten, more than half of the electors poll”; therefore, they say, “Let the clause stand.” Very well, let us presume that half will poll. In that case let us say that the interests are so great that half will poll—that the interests of the prohibitionists are so great on this question that they will roll up and poll heavily; and let us assume that the publicans will also roll up and vote heavily, because they would know if they did not they would very likely lose all their licenses. Very well, if this be the case, if we are assured that half are coming to the poll, why is the clause put in? It is put in for a reason; let us know what it is. If the argument of that side is sound, that half are sure to come to the poll, there is no necessity for the clause; and I say it is put in as a premium offered to people not to vote: that is what it is put in for, and for no other reason whatever. Now, there was a curious argument brought forward—I think, by the leader of the Opposition—giving certain figures. It was, that in a district of ten thousand people there would be, say, two thousand on the roll, the half of those being one thousand; so that six hundred would carry a vote in opposition to the will of ten thousand people. Surely that was not putting it fairly. Really, the six hundred would represent, at any rate, two thousand four hundred of the others, and the four hundred would represent one thousand six hundred of the others, and five thousand would be absolutely indifferent. And it would be the fault of the indifferent ones that they did not turn up and poll; and therefore I say in that case it can be shown that the two thousand four hundred would rule only one thousand six hundred; the others are uncertain, because they do not roll up, and you do not know how they would vote if they did. So that I do not think that argument stands at all. With regard to triennial licenses, that, I think, is one of the most serious blots on the Bill. All through the history of the liquor legislation here we have carefully preserved the annual licenses, and for a distinct reason—that there shall be no possibility of a claim for compensation being set up. Under this Bill we are beginning, it seems to me, to set up a claim for compensation. It is not the triennial license only. If there is no poll at the next period, three years after the first poll is taken, things go on as they are, and the license is one of six years, and it may be for nine years or twelve years. Well, Sir, if a license of nine or twelve years' standing does not set up a claim for compensation I do not know what will, and I think this Bill is taking a retrograde step in departing from the system of issuing

annual licenses, and annual licenses only. The honourable member for Manukan, in speaking this afternoon, said the same power existed under the Act of 1881. But when he read the clause of the Act of 1881 every one could plainly see that the comparison was not at all a fair one. The Act of 1881 says that the Committee shall have complete discretionary power. This Act does not say so; it does not give the Committees any power at all. It says a man has a right to a three years' license; and I say we are here beginning to set up the question of compensation. There are only one or two small points in the Bill, which are hardly worth notice on the third reading: still, to show how carelessly and hurriedly the Bill has been taken through, I will suppose the case of an election taking place three years after a district has voted for absolute prohibition. There is no public-house in the district; there is absolute prohibition. An election takes place again as to whether any licenses shall be granted. Who is to pay the expenses? The Bill says that the expenses are to come out of the licensing-fees. There are no licensing-fees at all; and who is to pay the expenses in this case? Now, I think we should find out as soon as we come to the third reading of a Bill what it really means; and a conversation which I think I am at liberty to retail to the House will explain, it seems to me, what the present Bill really means. Two gentlemen were talking on the Bill which is now before us—I will leave it to the House to judge as to what party they belonged to: one said, "Well, I think this is a very good Bill"; and his companion turned round and said, "Do you? Why?" "Well," replied the first man, "we have got a halter round our necks, but this is a reprieve for twenty years"; and that represents the case of those who are really interested in this Bill.

Mr. McLEAN.—It has been stated, I believe, in a jocular manner, inside this House, and more frequently outside the House, that the House of Representatives has been gone on wine, while the other House is a little weak on the woman question. I am glad, however, to state that woman has prevailed among the Lords, and I hope good sense will prevail in the House of Representatives on this question. I desire, before the Bill passes the third reading, to define my position as clearly as I possibly can, and as shortly as I can. When I was elected a member of this House the question upon which I was elected was the question of supporting the Government and their Liberal measures. When the last general election took place I was a candidate for this city, and upon that occasion I most emphatically, upon every platform, defined that I was a Liberal first, and a Liberal in all things, and I also stated I was in favour of reform in every shape and form. And I am also in favour of reform in the liquor traffic. I wish to say this: that I do not belong to the so-called liquor ring—that I have never received any support whatever from them. I also desire to say that I do not belong to the other party; and, so far as

I know, I did not receive the support of either party. I believe that I received a fair share of support from the Liberal party belonging to the temperance party, but, so far as the temperance reformers themselves were concerned, they took no part, I believe, in the late election. The question before the electors in this city on the 15th of January was, whether they should ring "the death-knell of the present Government,"—whether they would support the present Government and their Liberal measures. Therefore, Sir, the question of the liquor traffic was not prominently before the electors when I became a member of this House. But, as I have stated, I am in favour of reform in every respect, and I wish to here state to the honourable member for Inangahua that when he brought his Bill before this House I supported him in the second reading of that Bill. I left my party, believing it was not a party measure, and believing the honourable member for Inangahua was leading the reform of the liquor trade. I followed him upon the second reading. Further, I went to this extent: Believing he was the leader of that party and the leader of that measure, I warned the Government here that I would not be controlled in the measure then before the House, because I looked to the honourable member for Inangahua as my leader upon the Bill before the House. But we were beaten by a very narrow majority; and, as a party-man, I say—I am quite sure the honourable member for Inangahua will agree with me—that, as he had no Bill before the House, as he was fairly beaten upon the question of reporting progress, my duty, as a member of this House, was to fall back upon the party whom I supported generally in their politics. The Government announced that they were going to bring in a Liquors Sale Control Bill; and, the Government having brought in this Bill, when the Bill was distributed in our pigeon-holes I took home the measure, and I examined it well the first evening without consulting anybody or hearing any person's views, and I came to the conclusion it was an excellent measure. I came to the conclusion that the Premier had brought forward a Bill that would please both parties. The next day, before the House met, I met a number of leading citizens in this city—temperance reformers, certainly not officers of the Alliance, but gentlemen whom I have known in the city for a number of years as temperance reformers—and they agreed with me that the Bill brought forward by the Government was a splendid measure, and a measure that would suit both parties. That being the case, I decided to give the Bill my support as far as I could, for this reason: that I believe it is better to take half a loaf than have no bread at all. I have come to this conclusion—and I say it now in this House, and I will say it upon any platform in this city or in this colony: I am not going to be extreme with either party. I have never belonged to the publican party, and I hope as long as I live I shall never belong to any extreme party. I am a moderate man

in all things, and therefore I do not believe in an intemperate course in anything. I believe I have acted conscientiously as a conscientious Government supporter. Having got rid of the honourable gentleman and his two Bills, I think that my duty as a Government man was to go back to the party that I was connected with, and support them; and I have done so. The honourable gentleman may laugh; but, Sir, if he were in a critical position, and he found one of his party leaving, he would laugh on the other side of his face.

Sir R. STOUT.—It is not a party question.

Mr. McLEAN.—No, it is not a party question; and, therefore, as you have no Bill before the House—

Sir R. STOUT.—It is on the Order Paper.

Mr. McLEAN.—And it will be on the Order Paper till Doomsday as far as you are concerned. But the Government have a real, live Bill before this House, and I consider in this Bill there is a measure of reform, because it provides for the will of the people being carried out, if a reduction in the liquor traffic is desired; and, I say, so far as the cities are concerned at all events, there will be a real, live vote taken upon this question. I believe, as far as the cities are concerned, a man may stake his existence there will be a real, live vote taken upon this question, and, instead of half of the electors voting, you will have three-fourths voting. What was the case in Wellington at the last general election? More than three-fourths voted. What was the case in 1893? Out of ten thousand-odd voters seven thousand came to the poll; and that shows that, so far as this question is concerned, more than one-half will come to the poll. In addition to that, what was the case in Inangahua at the general election in 1890? More than three-fourths of the electors voted. And I think more than one-half voted last time. So far as Wellington, Inangahua, Westport, Wanganui, Bruce, and Greymouth were concerned at the last elections, although these electorates were very wide, and scattered over a large area, more than one-half went to the poll. With a purified roll, which we shall have presently, and with the votes of the ladies upon it, does any honourable gentleman dare to stand up on the platform and say that either in this city or in the country the publicans can prevent the ladies from going to the poll—can prevent one-half the people from going to the poll? Sir, they would not dare to risk their property, to risk their all, and try, as it were, to prevent people from using their legitimate rights, and going to the poll upon a question of this kind. In addition to that, I say the new poll will be a decided advance upon the last one. In the last one the whole of the ratepayers in the City of Wellington would not come to over four thousand, and now we shall have thirteen thousand or fourteen thousand upon the roll. Then, with regard to the purging of the rolls, we are told that the rolls will be stuffed immediately after the election. Does any honourable gentleman dare to stand up and say you can get women to take a false declaration—to run

the risk of being imprisoned for two or three years, as the case may be? Sir, it is not reasonable to think that the colonists of New Zealand will run these risks, and allow the rolls to be stuffed by publicans or anybody else. It is a libel on respectable people to think that they will allow themselves after the general election to come to the counter, or anywhere else, and make a false declaration that they are entitled to vote at the ensuing elections under this Act. With regard to the question of no license, and the three-fifths majority, I must say that I should have been inclined at the time the honourable member for Inangahua brought forward his Bill to support him upon the bare majority of those who went to the poll; but, after looking at his own Bill, and after considering other matters, I have come to the conclusion that in such a large question as this, where sixteen thousand people are engaged in this trade in New Zealand, and where the property amounts to over £600,000 in value, some little time should be given them to consider their position. Let the honourable member for Inangahua put the question on one side for the moment, and change his position with that of the publican. What happened in this city? A little over three years ago there were three hotels closed at the Te Aro end of the city in one day, and the effect of that was this: that one of the men had to go bankrupt immediately afterwards. In consequence of his bankruptcy, and in consequence of his family being turned out of home, it preyed upon his wife, and his wife died—I believe it was stated at the time—of a broken heart. But a revulsion of feeling set in in this city, and at the very next licensing meeting these three licenses were granted. What was the case not more than two or three months ago? One hotel was closed on Lambton Quay; I need not mention the name, for it is well known to every honourable gentleman. The publican who went into the hotel paid something like £900 to go in, and it was shut up at the last licensing meeting. What has been the effect of that? The publican has had to seek the protection of the Bankruptcy Court; his wife and family are turned out upon the streets of Wellington, and they are now seeking aid from the Benevolent Society. This is an aspect of the question which the extreme party on the other side should consider. I say that, assuming a direct vote will be taken, and one-fourth of the licenses will be reduced in this city, or in the whole colony, it means putting out into the street, or adding to the unemployed, four thousand people, and sweeping away the whole of their property. I am in favour of giving a reasonable time—such time as the Minister of Education spoke about—and I am in favour of dealing with the publicans in a just manner. I believe that drink has been a great curse in this and every country, and through others I have myself suffered from it; through others who have unfortunately been drawn into intemperate habits I have suffered very severely; and I have made up my mind, wherever I can, to

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help to improve this trade; but I am not going to the extent of saying that, in a popular vote, taken hurriedly, the properties of all the sixteen thousand people I have alluded to should be swept away in one day. And, while speaking upon this question, I think the Government should seriously take this into consideration: that if the Bill is passed—as I have no doubt it will be—and becomes law, presently we shall find a number of hotels shut up. I think the Government should immediately pass an Act which will enable the publicans among themselves to give some sort of compensation to those who go out—a Bill something similar to that brought in by the honourable member for Parnell last year. I voted against that Bill then, for the simple reason that it was asking the House, as it were, to grant in some form compensation, when the question was not before the House; but, now that a Bill has been passed which will do some good, and the result of which, in my opinion, will be a reduction in the number of licenses, I think the Government should allow the publicans, the brewers, and the wine and spirit merchants to compensate in some measure those who are turned out by the popular will. In regard to the closing of hotels, I think also there is some measure of reform in that. The hotels will be closed at eleven o'clock. I think this Bill is a step in advance, and I do not think we should try to crush these people out at once. We should give them reasonable time to put their house in order. At the present time, when a man who has £200 or £300 sees a hotel where the goodwill is worth, say £1,000, he goes to the brewer—no matter what his character may be—or to the wine and spirit merchant, and buys into the hotel on certain terms, and when he has been in the house one or two months he finds he has made a bad bargain, and the chances are that he may lose his money. The very next step he takes is to try to find another customer, and so the changes go on; and that is how the publican's business has become, as it were, a very low business. I think, when this Bill becomes law, it will improve the class of people holding hotels. The landlords will see that there is a better class of men put into the houses. The brewers and wine and spirit merchants will not trust men unless they are men of undoubted character. In the town where I came from at Home there are only three hotels, and under the law no new hotels can be opened there. The trade of a hotelkeeper is a respectable one there, because respectable people keep them. Now, I wish to say, further, that I consider there is a measure of reform here, because first of all it gives power to the people, if the people can be brought together. I consider that there is reform in this Bill, because it prohibits Licensing Committees from granting any further licenses excepting in special cases—cases where there is a large accession to the population in any district. So far as the electoral districts are concerned, I believe that every temperance reformer I have met prior to the introduction of this Bill was in favour of larger districts;

but now they are not happy because they see that it does not suit them. Under the Direct Veto Bill the electoral districts were to be the districts. The prohibition party some months ago were in favour of the districts being increased in size, and now they have got that they are not satisfied. Now, with regard to clause 9, I believe that is an improvement. It gives freedom of speech and freedom of action to the candidates. I believe there is also reform so far as clubs are concerned. Clubs will now come under the supervision of the police; and a stop may be put to the drinking which takes place, and to the so-called gambling—although, as I have said, I have never seen gambling in any club in this city; I do not say it does not take place, but I have never seen it. I say this is a measure of reform, and I am not going to stand in the way and say I will take no part in this matter. If we are going to improve this colony, if we are going to improve the people, there are many ways we may do it. The people must be educated through religion and through our schools, they must have good laws, and they must be educated up to the fact that excessive drinking is a crime, and to consider that a man getting drunk and making a beast of himself is to be condemned in the eyes of every right and good man. The whole community must enter into this question as to the drinking trade; but, as I have said, I cannot at present favour the whole trade being, as it were, swept away. I am, however, in favour of this measure passing; and, as soon as it is passed, those who desire that further improvements should be made in the law may rely upon me that I shall help them as far as I possibly can. But let us first have this Bill upon the statute-book, and, if honourable gentlemen propose an amendment next year in clause 15, I think that might be done to advantage.

Sir R. STOUT.—They will have got three years' licenses.

Mr. McLEAN.—Supposing they have. Let us consider what an advance has been made in the last ten or fifteen years. We have been earnestly requested to close publichouses, and in this Bill we have a measure of reform.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No reform at all.

Mr. McLEAN.—I say, Yes, it is. I have studied this Bill. I have slept over it. Honourable members may laugh, but I have gone to sleep thinking of this measure, and have awoke up thinking of it; and, whether honourable members believe me or not, I say conscientiously that there has never been a measure introduced into this House during the last two years to which I have given more consideration than this one. I say, with regard to the guarantee of the license for three years, that it is perfectly right, after a public vote has been taken, and after the people have been stirred up—it is, I say, but right that a man who has fulfilled the law and kept his house well should have some measure of security for the next three years. What would honourable members say if, after having gone through the turmoil of an election

and expended all their energy in the contest, and after they have been a year here, some one came forward and said that they should go to the poll again because they had changed their minds—ratted, as it were, from the Government policy? Members would treat with scorn such a suggestion—having, as I have said, fairly fought and won the contest at the general election. I shall not delay the House much longer. I shall be prepared to go before my constituents; and, if I have not done right on this question, it is because I have not had the power to think this matter out on a better basis; but I have done everything which I could conscientiously do, and I have dealt with the publicans as I would deal with any other class with regard to this question.

Mr. HARKNESS.—We have heard to-night, Sir, many remarkable speeches on this question, and perhaps one of the most remarkable is that which has been just delivered by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean); and there was also a noteworthy speech from the Minister of Education. The arguments brought forward by the Minister of Education have been very well answered by the honourable member for the Peninsula and the honourable member for Bruce; but there is one point in connection with his remarks which I should like to call attention to. He spoke in his speech of spoliation and confiscation by a majority of the votes of the people. What is the meaning of that expression? Does he wish the House to infer that the closing of publichouses by a majority vote is confiscation? If it is confiscation to close houses by a majority, it is just as truly confiscation, and as much spoliation, to do it by a three-fifths majority. I do not wish to further refer to the remarks of the honourable gentleman opposite, for, as I have said, they were very well answered by the honourable member for the Peninsula and the honourable member for Bruce. I rose for the express purpose of briefly lodging my earnest protest against the third reading of this Bill. When the second reading was being discussed I spoke strongly against the Bill, and I am somewhat proud of the position I then occupied, because I was told by the Premier that the only speaker who had condemned it was myself; but there are many in the House to-night who are taking up the exact position I took up then. On the second reading, I in the first place complained of the granting of compensation to the present holders of licenses by the fixing of triennial licenses. I complained also of the increased size of the licensing districts, which nullifies local control. There was also the disability of the 17th clause, demanding that half the electors should record their votes; and there was also the expense which we cast upon the local authorities in connection with the poll to be taken. For these reasons I spoke strongly against the Bill, and told the Premier that, whilst I agreed with the main principles of the Bill, I would do all in my power to make certain amendments in it. Those amendments were lost in Committee.

Mr. McLean

The measure in its present condition is retrogressive and unworkable; I therefore feel it to be my duty to vote against the third reading of the Bill. And I may tell the House that, though the Premier may flatter himself that he has introduced a measure which will give satisfaction to both sides, that will not be so. The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) who has been looked upon as the exponent of the liquor traffic in this House, and has been looked upon as one who is advocating the interests of those called "the trade," has clearly shown that there are in connection with this measure but two parties, and two parties alone—those who are in favour of the liquor trade, and those who are in favour of putting that trade under fair control. Now, I want to say, in connection with this matter, in my opinion this Bill is not about to give satisfaction, at all events, to those who are desirous of putting the trade under fair control. My opinion about the matter is simply this with reference to the whole question: The Government have in this Bill confused two issues—that is to say, License or No license, and the question of the legitimate and local control of the traffic. These two things are entirely distinct, and there are many members of the House who do not understand that these two questions stand on an entirely different footing from each other. Those who are in favour of the question to be put to the electors being simply, License or No license, are prepared to take extended districts—larger even than the electoral districts, if you like—and, under the poll taken for the election of members of this House, they are prepared in these large districts to give to the people a vote on the question of License or No license. But, they say, when you come to the question of the control and supervision of the liquor traffic, we should for this purpose establish districts in which there is a community of interests—which the districts provided for in this Bill will not give. I say that these two issues have been confused purposely in this House; and I believe the best feature in connection with the Bill, although I fear it will never be carried out, is the power of reducing the number of licenses by a percentage every three years. I approve of that principle, but maintain that, under the provisions contained in the 17th clause, it will be impossible to get any reduction in the number of licenses, and it will be impossible to close any licensed houses, and therefore I say that, looking at this from an unprejudiced point of view, it is a decidedly backward movement.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh!

Mr. HARKNESS.—Yes, Sir: I say, from an unprejudiced point of view. Now, I am not an Alliance man; I am a member of no Good Templar Lodge, and I have not been influenced by any one outside the House, for during the whole time this Bill has been before the House I have not received a single telegram or letter from any Alliance man or member of any other union. I am speaking entirely from a practical point of view; and

I maintain the Bill will give no satisfaction to those who are striving to bring the liquor trade under proper control; and, in fact, you will find that if it does pass into law, and is put on the statute-book, it will prove to be a retrograde movement. In many respects we have all we desire in the present licensing-law of 1881. It is needless to enter into a discussion of the whole Bill, though a good deal of the discussion that has already taken place upon it has been wide of the mark. I wish for a moment or two to refer to one or two remarks that have fallen from the honourable member for Halswell, the leader of the Opposition; and on this point I may say that I entirely differ from my respected leader: much as I respect his opinions in many ways I entirely disagree with him on this matter. He gave us a very carefully prepared speech—in fact, he usually prepares his speeches with much care; and the speech we had from him this afternoon was not like mine, just delivered on the spur of the moment—it was prepared with a great deal of care and thought; and he has gone even so far as to ascertain the views which John Bright and other Liberals have expressed on this question, and to bring them before the House. One point in his speech I wish particularly to refer to. He said that he was entirely opposed to the determination of such a question by a bare majority exercising judicial functions. Do you ask the people to exercise judicial functions when you give them the power of exercising a vote on the question as to whether there shall be licenses or no licenses, or as to whether there shall be a reduction of licenses? Are you asking the people to exercise a judicial function on these questions? By no means. I am as strongly opposed as the leader of the Opposition to placing in the hands of the people the power of framing enactments or making our laws; but when you ask the people to decide these questions affecting their social welfare it is not the formation of the law that is involved—it is the enforcement of the law which is made here by the representatives of the people, who are sent to decide these questions judicially, and to frame the laws which the people themselves are anxious to carry out. The honourable gentleman, with his cautious analytical mind and his power of discerning these things, carefully mixed them up and put them in the position in which he did in opposing the Bill on the third reading. I am sorry that I have to disagree with the honourable gentleman. I only wish he was on the right side of the House on this question, and viewed this matter from a different standpoint; but I believe the time will come when not only he, but many other honourable members who are now opposing this question, will come to see that it is wise to give people the control of the liquor traffic, and to throw on the people the entire responsibility of their own actions. They need not fear that they will be called upon to act in the exercise of a judicial function; but they will be called upon to exercise a vote on social

questions—on matters in which they are socially interested—to vote not judicially but on matters of fact. I shall vote against this Bill, and wish that I had half a dozen votes to cast against it.

Mr. MEREDITH.—I wish to say a few words before the final passing of the Bill, lest my reticence should be taken as a tacit assent to its provisions. I did not speak on the second reading of the Bill, and this is the only opportunity I shall have of doing so. I do not wish to make any lengthened remarks on the Bill for several reasons. One is, Sir, that you have been occupying that chair, as Speaker of the House, for so many hours to-night that it would be entirely wrong of me to inflict upon you the hardship of occupying it very much longer. In the second place, the ground has been gone over, and the provisions of the Bill have been so exhaustively dealt with that there is little left for me except to reiterate the remarks already made by honourable members. The Government, in introducing this measure, has acted, I think, in a proper manner. The Licensing Act of 1872 was passed in consequence of educated public opinion; the Licensing Act of 1881 in many respects was in advance of the Act of 1872, in that it was a much more liberal measure; but since the passing of the Act of 1881 a considerable change has taken place in public opinion on the liquor question, and any measure submitted to this House, to be in accordance with public opinion of to-day, should be a long way in advance of the Act of 1881. I give the Government credit for introducing this Bill: in fact, the hands of the Government were forced. We have had during the present Parliament shoals of petitions from every quarter and every centre of population in the colony, presented by almost every member of the House, praying that the Licensing Act might be amended in the direction of giving the people greater control. We have had letters and telegrams continually arriving, asking members to take a certain course in dealing with this question. I was one of a deputation consisting of ten members of the House who waited upon the Premier some four or five weeks ago, asking him when it would be convenient for him to give an expression of the views of the Government—as to what line of action the Government intended to take on the question. The honourable gentleman received us with his usual courtesy, and promised that the mind of the Government would be made known to the House on the second reading of the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. Lately a Temperance Convention was held in the City of Wellington, and a deputation from that Convention, consisting of some fifty ladies and gentlemen, waited upon the Premier and brought the matter before him. I had not the honour to be one of the members of the House who introduced that deputation, but I was informed by the senior member for the City of Auckland that the deputation was then waiting on the Premier. I went to the room where the deputation was, and, to my very great pleasure,

I found that not only was there a deputation of temperance workers waiting on the Premier, but two of the leading brewers of the colony were amongst the deputation—the honourable member for Dunedin Suburbs (Mr. Dawson), and another brewer, Mr. Moss Davis, from Auckland. Both gentlemen were amongst the deputation, and it was to me a matter of very great pleasure to see the lion and the lamb about to sit down together, and that a sort of amicable agreement was being made with the Premier as to the nature of the Bill to be submitted to the House. But on mature reflection I concluded that the two gentlemen I have just referred to, instead of forming part of the deputation with a view of having a local-option measure submitted to the House, were engaged in what is commonly called eaves-dropping—

Mr. SEDDON.—I wish to call your attention, Sir, to the serious charge which the honourable gentleman has made against a member of this House.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must not make any such charge against a member of this House; it is not allowable.

Mr. MEREDITH.—Very well, Sir. When the Licensing Act Amendment Bill was before the House the Premier gave an indication of the lines upon which the Government would proceed on this question. When that Bill was in Committee, and the Premier moved that progress be reported with the view of sitting again, he then stated to the House that he would accept the result of the division about to take place as an indication as to whether the Government was to go on with the question or not. I, Sir, was in favour of the continuance of the Bill in Committee, and consequently I went into the "Noes" lobby, with the view of showing to the Premier that it was my wish that the Government should introduce a Bill dealing with this question of local option. A few days later a leader appeared in the *New Zealand Times* dealing somewhat harshly with myself and thirteen other members of the House. We were called to account; we were accused of disloyalty, and many other wicked things, for daring to assert our rights, and acting in the interests of those who sent us here. But the inconsistency of this will be apparent when I point out that the Minister of Education declared on the floor of this House that he had given certain election pledges on this question, and that he was determined to carry out those pledges. No one questioned his right to make those pledges, or his right to vote according to his convictions; but surely, if it were allowable for the Minister of Education to make pledges to his constituents, and rigidly to adhere to those pledges, it is also allowable for any honourable member who is supporting the Government to carry out his pledges and act according to his convictions. It has been stated in the lobby that the elements of disintegration have entered into the Government party. I do not think, Sir, that such is the case. The very best friends of

the Government are those who think and act for themselves on questions of importance that are brought before this House. If a Government had a blind, obedient majority, a majority of servile followers, the result would be that such Government might be led into political corruption, and, in the meantime, lose the confidence of the country. I believe the best friends of the honourable gentlemen who occupy the Government benches to-day are those who think for themselves and act according to their convictions, and place the welfare of the country above party. I was pleased to notice, in the speech of the Minister of Education, that, while there were nineteen questions on which we agreed, the twentieth was one on which we might agree to differ, and yet, after all, make no difference in the solidity of the Government party. No honourable member will deny that there are a great many evils connected with the liquor trade. The consumption of alcoholic liquors is the cause of a great deal of evil, pauperism, and crime: it exercises a degrading influence. Honourable members have questioned the right of the Government to interfere with the right of the individual by controlling the consumption of alcoholic liquors. Sir, if the effects of the consumption of alcoholic liquor were confined to the individual, even then it would be right and proper in certain cases for the Legislature to interfere; but when the effects of the consumption of alcoholic liquors are not confined to the individual, then it is perfectly right and proper for the Legislature to step in. Looking at the police report laid on the table a few days ago, I find that the number of arrests for drunkenness was 5,360, or 40 per cent. of the total offences under the Police Act. The number under the heading of lunacy was 366: and the total cost of the Police Department for last year is £94,198 8s. 11d. Those connected with the temperance reform movement have been characterized on the floor of this House as enthusiasts, extremists, and faddists. Sir, I scarcely think that any honourable gentleman is justified in making use of any such terms. While those terms were used in reference to one particular class, no such terms of opprobrium were used in regard to the liquor trade by temperance advocates in the House. I should like to remind the House that all who have been engaged in any great reform in connection with our country in years gone by have been characterized in the very same terms. Take Father Mathew, who had so much to do with the temperance reform movement both in its inception and advancement; Cobden and Bright, who had to do with the repeal of the corn-laws; Clarkson and Wilberforce, with the abolition of slavery. All these have been characterized as extremists and faddists. Yes, and the greatest social reformer that ever trod this earth had his life taken away, while the multitude cried, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him, crucify him." So that, Sir, it will be at once seen that those who are engaged in the temperance reform movement at the present time are only receiv-

Mr. Meredith

ing the treatment that was given to other reformers in days gone by. I look upon the ladies and gentlemen connected with the temperance reform movement, including a very large section of the clergy of all denominations, as most respectable members of the community, endeavouring to do all they can to exercise an influence over the community, giving it a higher tone, raising it to a higher level, and so benefiting the masses of society. Sir, there is one question that has been left out of this Bill altogether that I should like to refer to, and I do so in the interest of those who are engaged in the liquor trade. It has been remarked to me on more than one occasion by those engaged in the trade that they consider it a great hardship that, while other people work six days in the week, and have the benefit of the seventh as a day of rest and for association and quiet with their families, those engaged in hotels are compelled by law to work seven days in the week. I think every respectable publican in this colony would be well pleased if he were allowed to close at the usual hour on Saturday night and not open until the Monday morning following. The *bond fide* traveller is the cause of a very great deal of drunkenness on Sunday, and the Act is being continuously violated in all directions. There is nothing easier than for a person to get a railway-ticket at Wilson's Siding, which is about three miles from Christchurch, for a few pence, and go to Christchurch, and he can get liquor at every hotel in Christchurch on presenting his ticket; and if a policeman comes on the scene he presents his ticket to prove he is a *bond fide* traveller. While I take exception to some of the provisions of this Bill, I may say there is a good deal in the Bill which I approve of. I admit there is in the measure a great reform. There is also a measure of retrograde legislation—that is to say, while it takes one step forward it takes two steps backward. In some matters it leaves us in a much worse condition than under the Act of 1891. But the main section I take exception to, and which I cannot bring myself to support, and in consequence of which I cannot vote for the third reading of the Bill, is subsection (6) of clause 12:—

“Whenever a license is granted after the taking of a poll in any district, the licensee shall have the right of an annual renewal of such license for the two years succeeding the original grant thereof until the taking of the next poll, unless in the meantime his license becomes indorsed for any breach of law in respect of any of the offences mentioned in section nineteen of this Act.”

This is the principle of continuity. When the Licensed Victuallers Compensation Bill was before the House last session I opposed it because it contained the principle of continuity. The principle of continuity in a license has never before been placed on the statute-book of New Zealand, and I consider it wrong on the part of this House to sanction the placing such a measure as this on the statute-book. If the Government would be prepared to strike out this clause I should be prepared to give

my support to the third reading of the Bill, though I look upon it as a measure which is not likely to last very long, and I have no doubt next session will see a measure introduced to modify or to amend this Act. But this clause would, in my opinion, impose a most vicious principle, a principle we have never admitted the right to place on the statute-book, and one I cannot agree with. On this account I shall be forced from conviction to go into the lobby and vote against the third reading of the Bill. Before I sit down I should like to refer to one or two remarks made by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean). He referred to two houses having been closed in Wellington, and to the reopening of one of those houses. He told us what a hardship it was upon the licensee, who had been deprived of that license, resulting in domestic troubles. Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman might have gone a little further and told us that the incoming tenant had paid, for the privilege of going into that house, £700. He might have told us, further, that a gentleman connected with Parliament, who has got influence with the Licensing Bench, had a mortgage of £1,000 on that hotel. This accounts for the reopening of the hotel. There is one circumstance which should arouse the suspicion of honourable members against the Bill as a Liberal measure—that is the attitude of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish). That honourable gentleman is in favour of the Bill, and I should like to point out that if this were a reform measure it is not likely that it would receive his support. Honourable members will recollect that when the present Government created the Labour Department,—which has conferred a great boon upon a very large number of the working-classes of New Zealand, giving employment and bread to men, women, and children,—that honourable gentleman did not spare himself in holding that department up to public ridicule, and heaping calumny on the Minister in charge of it. Again and again he attacked the Minister. Then, with regard to the co-operative system, that has been attacked again and again by that honourable gentleman. This is admitted by a majority of this House to be a useful system. Then, again, the woman's suffrage was stonewalled by that honourable gentleman; also the Licensing Bill.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Is the honourable gentleman in order?

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman does seem to be wandering from the question. I understood he was endeavouring to establish some connection between the Bill before the House and the matters mentioned.

Mr. MEREDITH.—I am trying to establish a connection and to show the House the reason why my suspicions have been aroused. When the Licensing Act Amendment Act was introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua, the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) stonewalled that measure for four solid hours, while he is in favour of this Bill; and that is a good indication, to my

mind, that there is not such a measure of reform in the Bill as we might reasonably expect. Furthermore, when this Bill came into my hands I was rather taken with the Bill, and thought it a very fair measure, but after I read it two or three times I found it was not such as I at first thought.

Mr. SWAN.—I did not intend to say one word on this question, as it has been so thoroughly threshed out in this House, but for some remarks made by the honourable member for Bruce. He was desirous to know how the publicans would vote on this question. I do not know that there are any publicans in this House, but I suppose he alluded to the brewing interest. As one representing that interest, I can inform the honourable gentleman that I intend to vote for the measure: not that we believe that it is in the interests of our trade, but that it is far preferable to the drastic and confiscatory measure which was introduced by the honourable member for Inangahua, and which passed its second reading. It is not because we believe that this is a good Bill, but because it is a far more just and more equitable measure than the one it took the place of. The Government are to be congratulated, when placed in a most difficult position, on the manner in which they have brought this question to the front and carried it through. I would, therefore, wish it to be understood that in the opinion of the trade it is not a desirable Bill, and that we would much prefer that it should not have been brought so far as it has been brought, and we believe, possibly, it may yet not be put on the statute-book. Nevertheless, I say that, considering the position, we must be thankful for small mercies, and that, as a matter of fairness and gratitude, we should certainly support the measure that has been brought in by the Government.

Mr. HALL-JONES.—Sir, I feel loth to take up the time of the House, seeing how well the question has been threshed out. I am well pleased that we have reached this stage of a Bill which has caused some unpleasantness in the House, and especially amongst the members of the Liberal Party. I fully recognised, when the Premier told us he would bring down a Bill to satisfy all parties, that he had a very difficult task before him. I should like to know whom this Bill does satisfy. Does it satisfy the brewing interest? or does it satisfy those who desire to see the question left for the people to decide? We shall see when the division takes place who are satisfied with this Bill. My honourable friend who has just sat down has told us that he is going to vote for the third reading of the Bill. I think that is an indication of who are in favour of it. His remarks somewhat contradicted the statement made by the Minister of Education—that the brewers would like to cast the Bill into the sea. Well, if the brewers are not satisfied, it is certain the temperance party are not satisfied; and then we have the intermediate party, who represent the majority of the people of the colony. They, too, are not satisfied with this Bill.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Yes, they are.

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Mr. HALL-JONES.—I say they are not satisfied. They look upon some of the provisions of this Bill as an insult to them. The Minister of Labour expressed the hope that the Liberal party would not be separated because they differed upon this question while they agreed upon nineteen out of twenty others. We must, however, not forget that this twentieth question, over which they do differ, touches upon one of the most important principles of Liberalism—that is, the right of the people to decide this or any other question. He also said that what the prohibitionists asked for was the confiscation of property, without compensation. That seems to me a somewhat extreme statement. The Premier will tell us that this Bill provides for prohibition by a three-fifths majority, and that that should be accepted; while his colleague, the Minister of Labour, says that prohibition by a bare majority is confiscation without compensation. If prohibition is right if carried by a three-fifths majority, how can it be confiscation if it is carried by only a bare majority? He also told the House that he was pledged to maintain the existing licensing-law. We heard that statement when he opposed the Bill of the honourable member for Inangahua. And yet he supports this Bill brought in by the Government. He also told us of Mr. Gladstone's Permissive Bill, but he did not tell us of the difference between the Permissive Bill of Mr. Gladstone and the Bill now before the House. The one was the introduction of local control, while the Bill we have before the House takes away the right which the people already have—the right of local option. He told us, again, that the prohibitionists were in a minority, and that he did not see why minorities should shape the legislation of this House. The House has not been asked to pass a prohibition Bill. Had that been the case I should have felt it my duty to vote against it. All we ask is that the people shall be allowed to decide this question. But let us see how far minorities do control the legislation of this House. We find that at the general election of 1890 the total votes recorded were 150,025. The number recorded for members who were elected was 88,150, and the whole of the legislation passed during the last three sessions and part of this one has been passed by honourable members who were elected by some fifty thousand out of these one hundred and fifty thousand votes, or, in other words, by about one-third of the total number of votes recorded. I do not wish to add anything to what has been said about the great cost to local bodies, or the continuity of licenses in the 12th clause, or the three-fifths majority in the 17th clause. I should have been content to accept these provisions had it not been for the proviso at the end of this 17th clause, under which one-half of the voters upon the electoral roll will have to record their votes before the ballot is valid. This is the worst feature of the Bill, not alone because all absentees, all sick men, and men who have been dead for years will be a factor, but, what I fear most, be-

cause fictitious names will be placed upon the roll for the purpose of swelling the number required to make a legal poll. We are told that the roll will be purged,—that, if the Electoral Bill does not pass its other stages, some short measure will be brought in for the purging of these rolls. The general election will take place in December, and the licensing poll will be taken in March. Now, what will be done? What do we find in Dunedin? Only the other day we were told that fifty-two claims to be enrolled on the burgess-roll were made, that the City Council valuer declined to certify them as correct, but a majority of the Council allowed them, and that amongst these claims there were the following: eleven claims in respect of one lease which had been subdivided, a brewer claiming for his son, his son's wife, and his bottler in respect of his bottling-house, for his cooper in respect of a shed, and for five or six others for other portions of his property. And why was this done? Simply to increase the power of the brewer to the disadvantage of the general public. If they would do this, they would not hesitate to place fictitious names on the roll, so that they might have the power of using these fictitious names also. The whole question, to my mind, is, Are the people as a whole competent to deal with this question? Are they capable of expressing an intelligent opinion on this matter, without inflicting injustice on any section of the community? I think they are. I do not think all the wisdom of the colony is centred within the four walls of this building. I think the people are fully as competent to deal with this question as are members of this House; and, if the honourable gentlemen who are supporting this Bill think that the people are so incompetent, so ignorant, that they cannot fairly deal with this question, let them say so at once and have done with it. I say emphatically that those who vote for this Bill will vote for taking away the rights and privileges which people held under the Act of 1881 and the Amendment Act; and that all those who are pledged to vote for local option and vote for this Bill will be betraying the trust reposed in them. There is no possibility of prohibition being brought about by this Bill, and I do not think reductions can be made under its provisions; and, as it takes away the rights of the people, I shall vote against the third reading.

The House divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 85.

Blake	Kelly, W.	Smith, E. M.
Bruce	Lawry	Smith, W. C.
Buckland	Mackintosh	Swan
Cadman	McGowan	Tanner
Carncross	McGuire	Taylor
Carroll	McLean	Thompson, R.
Dawson	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Fish	Mitchelson	Valentine
Fraser	Palmer	Willis.
Guinness	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Houston	Reeves	Hogg
Kelly, J.	Seddon	Sandford.

NOMS, 13.

Hall-Jones	Meredith	Wright.
Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton	
Joyce	Rolleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Saunders	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, T.	Stout	Harkness.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Hall
Duncan	Moore
Duthie	Allen
Mackenzie, M. J. S.	Rhodes
McKenzie, J.	Newman
O'Connor	Wilson
Richardson	Buick
Russell	Hutchison, G.
Shera	Mills, J.
Ward.	Fergus.

Majority for, 22.

Amendment negatived.

Bill read a third time.

Mr. SEDDON moved, That the Bill do now pass.

Mr. C. H. MILLS.—Sir, before the Bill is passed I wish to say a word or two. I have not said anything on this Bill, but I have voted consistently in the direction I think best in the interests of the colony at large. I have no intention to keep the House any time, but would simply like to say that I believe the measure as passed is one that will be received by all sides—whenever it is fully understood by the country—as a great step, and a good step, in the right direction. I was sorry to hear the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, who, until the present time, has supported the Bill. While I was listening to him I thought at first that he was following a good lead, but he then seemed to me to make a big buck at a four-rail fence, and yet not take it. I do not wish to say anything further upon this measure.

Sir R. STOUT.—I am very much surprised that the Government should put up their Whip to prolong the debate. The object of prolonging the debate is really to give the Premier a right to reply, which he did not avail himself of on the third reading. I submit that it is wrong for the Premier to reply on the motion, "That the Bill do pass." It is entirely an innovation in this House. It is never done in the House of Commons except as a matter of explanation; but, now it has been done, I must take this opportunity to make a speech in reply to the Minister of Education. I am very sorry that I should feel called upon to take this course; but, if these tactics are resorted to, I must exercise my right, and I am afraid I shall take up some time in doing so. I want to reply to the speeches that have been made on the third reading. It has been said that this Bill is an advance, and gives greater control to the people than the present law. I say it gives less control to the people. I must trace down what the existing law is. The old Act, which was repealed by the Act of 1881, provided that two-thirds of the

people could prevent the issue of a particular license; but this was considered entirely unsatisfactory, and was found impossible to be carried out in a rational manner. In 1876 I introduced a Bill which gave a bare majority the right to vote for Licenses or No licenses, and if a bare majority carried No licenses there could be no licenses issued. On the second reading of that Bill I stated that I should be willing that the existing law should be retained as regards the two-thirds majority if I could get the other provisions of the Bill—that is, if I could make the vote a vote for the whole district and not for individual licenses. That Bill was carried on the second reading: it was not proceeded with further then. One reason for the delay was Dr. Featherston's death, and the debate was adjourned. After that nothing was done that session, but, I think in the next session, Sir William Fox introduced a Bill which gave control to a bare majority, and I strongly supported that Bill. In consequence of that agitation, which extended for several years, the 1881 Act was introduced. That Act for the first time gave the right to vote generally, but it did not put the question, "Licenses or No licenses?" It put another question before the people—namely, as to the increase of licenses; and in that Act a bare majority decided. Since that Act was passed the agitation has been continually before the country to have the question of Licenses or No licenses decided by the people. Now I want to trace what has been done this session, in order to show how the Government have dealt with this matter. I brought down first the Direct Veto Bill; but I had no opportunity of explaining the provisions of that Bill, and it was simply allowed to remain on the Order Paper. I then brought in the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. That Licensing Act Amendment Bill allowed the question to be put to electors of the colony—not merely electors who were ratepayers, but to all electors—and it contained the question whether there should be Licenses or No licenses. Practically in all other respects it left the Act of 1881 unaltered. That Bill passed its second reading; and how honourable members who voted for the permanent principles in that Bill could vote for affirming the principle in the Bill now before the House—namely, the Government Bill—is entirely beyond my comprehension. The principle of the Government Bill is entirely different from that of my Bill. The next thing was that my Bill went into Committee, and one clause was passed. The Premier moved that progress should be reported, and said he would bring down a Bill that would satisfy all parties. This Bill has been brought down; and the Government party in the House—which is known as the party in favour of the trade—is the only party satisfied. I want to meet the objections urged that this Bill is a reform. In what respect is it a reform? The only reform in the Bill is this: that it allows all on the electoral rolls to vote. As to that, I have to say that it depends entirely on who are to be on the electoral roll whether it is a reform or not.

Sir R. Stout

Now, if woman's franchise does not become law it will be no improvement, because on the ratepayers' rolls now women have the right to vote, and three-fourths of the women vote in one direction, as the honourable member for Dunedin City, who questions it, knew to his cost at the mayoralty elections. What, then, Sir, does this Bill do? This Bill repeals the Act of 1881 in so far that it cuts out the power which that Act contains of refusing licenses. The power that Act contains is such that the Licensing Committee can refuse all the licenses in a district—in fact, abolish them. The present Act contains that power; and it has been exercised in the West Harbour District, in the Roslyn District, in the Catlin's River District, and in various other licensing districts throughout the colony; and certainly in some districts in the North Island. Some of these cases indicate, in my opinion, what can be done under the Act of 1881. The power that existed under that Act is taken away. That power is taken away; and what is substituted for it?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Quite right, too.

Sir R. STOUT.—The honourable member says, "Quite right." I know that that honourable member votes on the other side, and he also votes with the temperance party—he is able to vote on both sides. I allude to the honourable member for Masterton. One would have thought that he would have voted in a different direction. What do we get in exchange under this Bill? We have in exchange the right to vote; but how is that vote dealt with? First, half of the electors on the roll must record their votes. What does that mean? I again point out that it means that every one who abstains from voting is treated as having recorded his vote in a certain direction. The right of the people is absolutely and utterly destroyed under this Bill, because the voting means this: not that the poll is declared void—I could understand that; I could understand an Act saying that if half the people did not vote the poll should be declared void, and referring the whole question to the Committee. You might say, in such a case, that, as the electors had not chosen to vote, their opinions had not been declared, and as they had not been declared we were not to be subject to their views on the matter. But that is not what this does. It says, though the poll is declared void, yet the vote shall be taken as if the people had answered the question in the affirmative that licenses shall be granted; and that where there is no poll these three-year licenses are to remain—that the number of licenses is not to be touched for three years, and the Committee must give licenses running for three years. No wonder that those in favour of the trade vote for such a Bill. This is, instead of a reform, as the honourable member for Ashley well said, two steps backwards. I contend that this is a principle that has never been in any Licensing Act in New Zealand before, and there has never been a Licensing Act in New Zealand before so favourable to the trade as

this Bill in this respect. What, then, is the case? The case is, that you may vote for what is termed a reduction. But you have this power now without this Bill at all. The Licensing Committee, if elected in favour of reduction, can reduce without any vote of the people. But it may be said, "You have the direct veto of 'No license.'" But how is it encumbered? You must first get half the voters on the roll to vote, and then you are to have a majority of three-fifths. And then, it was pointed out by one honourable member that at a general election a great many more than half the voters voted. Why, they have to vote, because it is whether A or B shall be chosen—those in favour of A go to the poll, and so do those in favour of B. But this new poll is not a question of whether A or B shall be chosen, for if you abstain from voting you may win the election. That is how it stands. Then, you are asked to get one-half. The Premier laughs: he knows perfectly well what this Bill is designed to do—it is wholly designed to get triennial licenses, and to have the temperance party deceived at the general election. Because what would their position be at the next poll? It would be this: They might win the general election and return men pledged to local option,—men who would hold their pledges and not break them. But what would happen, even with this? You have got three-year licenses, and you cannot interfere with them, because Parliament has given them. I say this Bill is not a step forward, but a step backward; and I ask, even now, honourable members to pause before they pass this Bill. Why, Sir, some of the reasons given for the support of the Bill are hardly worth mentioning—they are so trivial. One honourable gentleman said he voted for this Bill because I had brought in a Bill and he had voted for that. I suppose if half a dozen Bills had been brought in he would have voted for them equally, forgetting that there was a distinction of principle between them, and that he could not, by any salve to his conscience, prove to his constituents that he had voted rightly. I say those who voted against my Bill are right in voting for this Bill, but not in the converse way. Now, what is the object of this Bill? Is it a settlement of the question? We have been told that there is a split in the Liberal party. If there is, who has caused it? It is not I. What did I urge the Government? I said they would do wrong in touching this question, and I read from Hearn's "Government of England"; and I appeal to any book on constitutional government—I do not care what book you refer to—and I venture to say there is not a single book on constitutional government in the library but would say that the Government did wrong in touching this question. They were not called upon to do so. When is a Government called upon to do so? Only when it will affect their administration. How did this affect it? Is every question of legislation because it is a large question to be taken up by the Government? If so, instead of eighty-three Bills being on the Order Paper there

would be three times that number, and not a third would pass. Are the Government going to say that they are to call upon men who are Liberals, and who have been temperance men all their lives, to abandon their principles? They have no right to call upon their party to do so. They are doing wrong in this respect; and they may be imperilling the seats of some of the Liberal party by causing them to vote for a Bill which the temperance party cannot support. And they ought to know that in every town in New Zealand—let me take Dunedin, for example—there is a Workmen's Electoral Committee, who have issued a platform by themselves, and what is laid down as one of its chief planks is that there must be direct veto by a majority; and we find the same laid down a while ago in Christchurch, although there it is apparently withdrawn, and the association is split on this very point. The same thing has been laid down in Auckland; and I undertake to say that in the various Liberal Associations I know of there is hardly one but what has laid this down as a plank in its platform; and do the Government think that this is going to be abandoned at the next election? I undertake to say that in Dunedin—because I only speak of what I know best—at least three-fourths of the working-men, though not total abstainers at all, yet see that the only truly democratic course is to allow the local control of the liquor traffic to be a part of their platform, and one of its main planks; and that cannot be got rid of. And let me mention one very important and influential organization which, I say, the Liberal party cannot ignore—namely, the Knights of Labour. And what is one plank of their platform also? It is the local control of the liquor traffic. And so strong is the stand of that organization on this question that it objects even to receive as one of its members a man who sells liquor: it does not matter how he sells it, if he sells it at all he cannot become a member.

Mr. HOGG.—And lawyers, as well.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes, lawyers too; and perhaps they might draw the line at some journalists, if they knew all about them. But what do they do—so strong are they? Of course, the reason they exclude lawyers is perfectly well known; the lawyer is not a working-man, and they will only receive working-men. But that organization is so strong that Mr. Powderley, in his book on labour—I have not brought his book, else I might read a few extracts; but I will give one or two illustrations to show how particular they have been. They have laid down this principle: The wife of one member of their organization opened a saloon. The husband said he had nothing to do with it. He was himself a working-man on the railways—a railway employé; but his wife opened a saloon in America. It was referred to the Master Workman as to what was to be done; and what did the Master Workman say? "We will give the man an honourable discharge if he so desires, but he cannot remain in our organization when his wife

is a saloon-keeper; he must either take his honourable discharge or get a divorce." They would not keep him otherwise in their organization.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They are Liberals.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes, they were perfectly liberal, because they see that there is no hope, I say, for the workman if you are to allow the liquor traffic to dominate. You may pass Industrial Conciliation Bills by the bushel, you may pass as many Shop-hours Bills as you please, you may if you like pass Workmen's Wages Bills; but if you allow the liquor traffic to throttle your working-men such Bills are utterly valueless, and may be cast into the waste-paper basket. And do you think a great organization like the Knights of Labour does not know the issues at stake in this matter? The Knights of Labour is an organization throughout the whole of the United States; it is now in Australasia, and is entering Europe. These Knights have the interests of working-men entirely at heart: do you think that they do not know what is best for themselves as working-men? And this is an organization that the Liberal party cannot afford to ignore. If they are going to the elections, and are going to have against them the Knights of Labour, who are so strong now in many electoral districts, and are binding the working-men together—and properly so, because it is only by union that the working-men can accomplish anything—and, if we are going to have against the Liberal party the various associations throughout the colony, what will be the effect on the Liberal party? They are not going to sacrifice their liberty on the altar of the liquor party; and why should the Liberal party have brought forward this Bill entirely in the interests of the liquor party, and have placed their supporters who are temperance men in this most unfortunate position? They have imperilled the seats of many of their supporters by having made it a party question. Then, we are told that it is undemocratic to settle this question by a direct vote, and that if the people are at all to be heard it must be through direct representation. Undemocratic! What is the meaning of Liberalism but a trust in the people, and that the people are the rulers? If you can get the voice of the people, your duty is to get it and obey it. That is what Liberalism means. All these forms of representative government are simply the machinery to get at the voice of the people. I admit that to give due time for reflection and consideration you must have certain checks; but in the end you are guided by the majority. What is this principle—the principle of the direct veto? what does it mean? It does not mean the referendum. The referendum means legislation—this means simply an administrative act; it has no bearing on the question of reading Bills a first, a second, or a third time, and of two Chambers. It is an administrative act; it is License or No license: that is purely an administrative act. And who is to confer the license? If we say the license is to be given by a judicial body, this

Bill is useless. Who are to give the licenses, then, but the people? And, if it is to be the people, ought it not to be a majority of the people? Surely you are not going to say, as this Bill says, that the minority of the people have the right to keep the present system in force against the majority! That is what this Bill says. Is that Liberalism? Has it come to this—that we are to have a minority ruling us in reference to licensing? That is what this Bill says, and I therefore submit that it is not a liberal measure; and I go further and say that it is distinctly a retrograde step: it gives less control to the people than they have now under the existing law, and I say that no Government is called upon, in the last part of a session, to limit the privileges of the people;—it ought to increase them. And my Bill proposed to increase them, while this Bill proposes to limit them. If it gave any increase of power to the people I should not have opposed it, though it did not go the length I wished; but I have shown that this Bill, by destroying the powers of the elective Committees, and limiting their power of reducing licenses as they pleased, and of doing away with licenses if they pleased, is limiting the powers of the people. And it is doing more—it is so far limiting the power of the people as to prevent legislation in the future, and that is what I say is entirely unfair. I am sorry I had to rise, but the Government are adopting, apparently, a new policy of having two discussions, one on the third reading of a Bill and the other on the passing stage, which I think is entirely wrong, and an entire innovation. Again I say that I have never seen the question "That the Bill do pass" used for any other purpose than for a personal explanation, or if something has been omitted; and I can refer to *Hansard* after *Hansard* of the English House of Commons to show this. I am not saying that your ruling, Sir, is wrong; I am not denying the right—I am only referring to the custom; but I can refer to *Hansard* after *Hansard* of the English House of Commons, in which it will be seen that the right is never availed of except for the sole purpose of making a personal explanation or saying a few words in explanation of the Bill. No doubt the Premier was within his rights in acting as he did on a previous occasion; but it is a very dangerous proceeding, and it is another proof, if proof were needed, of the necessity for an alteration of our Standing Orders. I have availed myself of the opportunity to reply to the remarks made on the third reading, and I can only repeat that I exceedingly regret the position in which many members of this House have been placed. I doubt not many of them have been placed in a position of very great difficulty. It was not I who placed them in that position; it was the Government. They should not have been placed in that position; because I feel assured that many of them, through a feeling of loyalty to the party and loyalty to the Government, are supporting a Bill which they believe to be wrong in principle.

Sir R. Stout

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I wish to confirm what has fallen from the last speaker as to the practice which has been followed by the Premier in debates, and I hope it will be a lesson to that honourable gentleman. He has adopted a practice which reopens the debate, and which, it is now shown, will not be to the advantage of the Government. It is not a course that shows courage. It is a determination to have the last word without the possibility of any interpolation thereafter, and it leads, as it led last session, to statements being made in regard to which there is no opportunity on the part of honourable members affected by those statements to give any explanation thereafter. I have just one word to say. I am not going into the question of this Bill any more. I took some pains to explain my views, and I have nothing to add to the remarks I made on the main subject. I just wish to refer to the speech made by the Minister of Education on behalf, I presume, of the Government. The speech was, I think, on the whole, from his point of view and from my point of view, a very good one, except that at the end of it he brought in what he had no right whatever to bring in. We have heard a great deal about the cry of the Liberal party, and we have heard from that honourable gentleman an impassioned appeal to the Liberal party of this House not to break up this great party, which is doing such enormous service in the interests of the working-men and in the interests of the country generally. That appeal, and the way in which he went over the names of members of the great Liberal party, and called upon this House to bow down and worship them as men who deserved the praise and confidence of their fellow-men, was, I think, entirely beside the purpose. What has the great Liberal party done with regard to these social questions? We have heard a great deal about the Liberal party who have dealt with these great social questions. That is all nonsense. Liberality, in these matters, does not exist on one side or the other; it exists with those public men, on both sides, who are in sympathy with their fellow-men, and who are determined to carry out social reforms. At any rate, the record of social reforms carried out by honourable members on this side bears favourable comparison with that of honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House. Take the liquor law of 1881. I call that a Liberal measure. I call that a measure which was a step in advance—due, no doubt, to a great extent to the action of the honourable member for Inangahua and his temperance friends in bringing the question forward. There is no exclusive claim on the part of any side of this House in the matter of this liquor legislation, but the Act represented a very carefully-thought-out measure, bringing the liquor question up to the point which represents the advance of popular opinion. That measure stood the test of time, and, as I have said on a previous occasion to-day, it is simply through the apathy of the people that that measure has not had proper effect. And to-day we are having forced upon us

a hasty and premature, a crude and useless measure. That is my belief with regard to this measure, and I look upon the measure altogether with the greatest apprehension, particularly in conjunction with the measure that has been passed affecting the electoral law of the colony. Let us not hear any more about this term "Liberalism" when we are dealing with social questions. It is quite beside the purpose. I myself and others have quite as great a claim to the confidence of our fellow-men in respect of what they are pleased to call Liberal measures as the members on those benches. I suppose the honourable gentleman, when he replies, will stonewall the Bill for about an hour, and I hope he will let us hear what these measures are that have been brought in in the interests of their fellow-men. What have the working-men in the colony got to look to, and what have they got in the past? I know of nothing. I have seen a party attempting to place itself at the head of an agitation in this country, which is just a lapping of the wave on the shore—a wave that is coming from older countries—trying to put themselves on the crest of the wave and ride to power on that. I think the time is not far distant when the public of the colony will see how little they have to thank that party for. Those the public have to thank are those public men who are in sympathy with them, and lose no opportunity of working in their interests. But to make these social questions party questions, as, I am sorry to say, the Minister of Education did to-day, is an entirely wrong thing. The great social reforms, even at Home, have not been carried out by the Liberal party. The great social advances cannot be credited to any one party, and never will be the work of any one party. Sir, what has this Government done in respect to the liquor trade? Can it look back to its record and say that its action in respect to the licensing-law has been a happy one? What were the papers teeming with with regard to that license in the Waikato? What have the papers been teeming with with regard to granting club licenses, when the hotel licenses were being done away with in Wanganui? I do not know that their action—I have not followed it very closely—in the Sydenham matter has been in the interests of the cause of temperance. I do not think it has, as far as I know; and I do not think the present Government are entitled to the confidence of the public in respect either of their legislation in regard to the liquor trade or in respect of any other social movement at the present time.

Mr. REEVES.—Sir, there is one thing quite certain, and that is that the leader of the Opposition will never be at a loss to find a grievance, or fail to pick out some fault when the measure itself does not contain one. The honourable gentleman is the most imaginative grumbler in New Zealand, and the most determined. More uncalled-for grumbling, fault-finding, and carping than he has treated us to with regard to my speech to-night I have never had the pleasure of listening to

since I have been in this House. The honourable gentleman seized hold of the latter part of my speech and foisted a meaning upon it which was never intended to be placed upon it, and he proceeded to found upon that an exaggerated diatribe against my political friends and myself. The honourable gentleman said I made a frank appeal to the House, and alluded to the voice of the great Liberal party. I made no appeal to honourable gentlemen on this side of the House at all. For the moment I left that out of the question altogether. I made an appeal to certain members of this House who belong to our party to remember that they do belong to our party. I did not ask them to abandon any principle they had taken up, or any line of conduct they had laid down. I only asked them to reflect that, in differing on this question, we should try to differ as friends, not as enemies. On the strength of that, my honourable friend was pleased to call from the depths of his fancy a series of insulting reflections upon himself and his friends. Nothing of the kind existed. There was no reflection cast upon that side of the House. I never said what any of them had or had not done in the past. We know social reforms have been passed with the help of certain honourable members on that side. I passed no judgment on their conduct in the past, at the present time, or on what it may be in the future. I simply made an appeal to certain members of one party to remember that they belonged to that party. Surely no more justifiable appeal was ever made by mortal man in this House. Then the honourable gentleman said that the social reforms in the Mother-country were carried out by the Conservative party. As a matter of fact, that is absolutely contrary to historical truth. It is quite true that one leading social reform was carried out by Lord Shaftesbury, who belonged to the Conservative party; but it is also true—we have it from Lord Shaftesbury's own mouth—that that reform was carried out against the wishes of his own party; and if you read up history you may hunt long before you find the record of any social reform carried out by a Conservative Minister or the Conservative party. The honourable gentleman made a very serious reflection upon us with regard to Native licenses in the Wai-kato—"the papers teeming with complaints," he said. As Minister of Justice, the matter concerns me; and let me say this: While I have been Minister I have only had one application for a Native license, in what is called the King-country—that is, I suppose, what the honourable gentleman referred to. That application I peremptorily refused. I did not take the trouble to lay the matter before the Cabinet. I took the responsibility of refusing it, and it was refused. I thought it was my clear duty to refuse the license, and I did so. That is the only case which has come before me of an application for a license there. The other day I was applied to to grant a license in a certain district in the North Island. The Natives did not want the license to be granted. I was asked to grant it—in the face of the

fact that the local-option poll had been against the granting of licenses—on the score that the whole of the members of the Licensing Committee had signed the petition to me to grant the license. I simply refused to grant it; and that may be taken as an instance of what these elective Committees will do, even where the people, at the time of their election, have declared by their vote that there should be no licenses. Let me say, in conclusion, I think the comparison made by the honourable member for Inangahua between the Licensing Committees and their working and the possible working of our Act is not at all a happy one. Will he say what the Licensing Committees have done in regard to this question? I ask him to look and say what they have done; and, looking at the history of the colony for the last ten years, you will see that the result of the working of the licensing system by the Committees has been a general increase of licenses throughout the colony, although in one or two isolated cases—one or two comparatively trifling cases—there may have been a reduction.

Mr. SEDDON.—I may say, first, as regards the practice of replying on the question "That the Bill do pass," that such a course is not of my creation. That was done before I held the position of Premier, and before we came on these benches at all. Again, who commenced it? And what would have been the position to-night if what the honourable gentleman contends for had been carried out? Had I spoken to the third reading in reply we should have had the same speech we have just listened to from the honourable member for Inangahua, and another reply to that.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—No.

Mr. SEDDON.—"No," says the leader of the Opposition. I know about the preparation that was made, and I know positively that we should have had the same speech.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He has left.

Mr. SEDDON.—Why has the member for Inangahua left? I ask the question—why? To make the statement that has been made, and to give that as the excuse for making a speech in the face of the fact which I have now stated—I say it is endeavouring to place myself and the Government in an unfair position before the people. I consider that I was consulting the convenience of honourable members, who have stayed up to this hour of the morning, in not reopening the debate, or giving an opportunity for reopening it, after the third reading. I am quite prepared, in the future, if honourable members agree to that course, that the final reply shall be on the third reading of a Bill. Of course the final reply is always given to the honourable member or Minister who has moved a motion. We know that only recently, and after the question had been put and carried "That the Bill do pass," an attempt was made by the member for Mount Ida to get behind your ruling, Sir, so as to speak on the main question, by moving an amendment to the title of the Bill. If it is to be the rule that the reply

Mr. Reeves

shall be on the third reading nothing will please me better, and I am quite prepared to submit proposals to alter the Standing Orders to that effect. But so long as the Standing Orders remain as they are, it means that a debate may be reopened after the third reading. I am surprised at the honourable member for Inangahua. After the two speeches which he has made to-day, and after all that has taken place, I feel that I have every reason to complain of the treatment the Government has received at his hands. When the honourable gentleman was leaving for the South on private business he came to me and asked me to postpone the third reading of the Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill until he came back, and I, generously, believing that I should be treated in a similar spirit, said I should be very glad to postpone the third reading until he returned. The measure was of such importance that I did not think it would look well—seeing that he had opposed it in Committee—if I had refused his request, and I said Yes; but I added that I expected that there would be an agitation against the Bill while the honourable gentleman was on his journey: and I had an idea that such would be the case. What has been the result? Right along the line, from Christchurch to Dunedin, there has been an agitation; and the honourable gentleman himself addressed two meetings in Dunedin on this question. I say the reply to that agitation in reference to this Bill is the division which has just taken place. In reference to this measure, I will ask honourable members to remember that the honourable member for Inangahua called back the recollection of honourable gentlemen to the facts that had taken place in connection with the Bill. I ask honourable members not to forget what occurred when the honourable member, in his place, moved that you, Sir, do leave the Chair in order to go into Committee on the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. What was the offer then made by the Government to the honourable gentleman? The offer was then made that we should go into Committee and pass one clause, and report progress, with the pledge that, if he was not satisfied when the Government Bill came down, he should be restored to as good a position with his Bill—that another night should be set apart so that he would be enabled to go on with his Bill. But when the honourable member carried the motion to go into Committee on the Bill, and he came to this chair at the table, and I made the offer to him, how did he meet that proposal? There was nothing said as regards the question of the vote of the bare majority when the proposal was first made. When it came to the question of reporting progress, then we heard for the first time the question of the bare majority; and then we heard for the first time of License or No license. I said then, and I say again—and I feel now very strongly upon that point—that the honourable member for Inangahua might have added to what he then said, “My Bill or no Bill.” The honourable member asked the Government to take up his

Bill. Did he tell us then as he did to-night—did he tell honourable members then that we should relegate this question to the general elections? No, Sir. It was owing to the position the Direct Veto Bill got into through the financial debate that he introduced the Licensing Act Amendment Bill; and when the second Bill got into position he tried to force that Bill through the House, even in the face of the pledge given by the Government that it would reinstate that Bill, should he afterwards desire it, and that the Government in the meantime would bring down a measure to deal with this question. The honourable gentleman gave us a history of this matter this session; but let us look at the Bill of 1876. What was then offered? A ratepayers' franchise, where the ratepayers had from one to five votes, the same as they would have in a borough election. On reference to *Hansard* honourable members will see, when going into Committee on that very Bill, that he was quite prepared to accept a two-thirds majority, and that of ratepayers. He admits that now. All I say is this: Time, as he says, changes one's opinions. But I wish to bring honourable members back to 1884, 1885, and 1886, when he was Prime Minister. Knowing the defects in “The Licensing Act, 1881,” knowing the demand that was made in the colony by the temperance reformers, did he, when the responsibility was upon his shoulders as Premier, take any steps to bring in a Bill to amend the Licensing Act so as to carry out the reforms that he now demands? No, Sir; I say there was on his part no attempt made. And I go further and say that, when seeking election to this House—I have carefully read the honourable member's speeches to the electors of Inangahua—he did not take them into his confidence and say that he looked upon this reform as being imperative—that it must be dealt with this session, or that he was going to introduce the Bills he has since introduced dealing with it. Let me ask the question why, if it was so imperative in the interests of the colony, if this liquor traffic was the great curse that he tells the House it is, did he not take the constituents he represents and the colony into his confidence before the House met? The first we knew of it was when he introduced the Direct Veto Bill, and subsequently the Licensing Act Amendment Bill. When the Direct Veto Bill was introduced, what were its provisions? I say its provisions were, line for line, the provisions in the Bill now before the House and before the country—namely, that there should be a direct issue upon four questions. One was as to the increase of licenses; the second was, Shall licenses remain as they are? the third, Shall there be a reduction? and the fourth, Shall no licenses be granted? The electoral districts were to be the boundaries, and the electoral rolls were to be the rolls used for licensing elections. I repeat that, when the Temperance Convention met in Wellington and interviewed me, and when I asked the question of them as to the boundaries and licensing districts—and it is on the records and in public prints—representing, as

they did, the whole temperance party in the colony, and speaking to the Prime Minister, they recommended me to adopt the electoral boundaries and the electoral rolls. Then, when we have a measure brought down containing these boundaries and with the electoral rolls, we have this opposition springing up, and we are told that we are going backwards. We are told that we are taking from the women the right which they now have of voting on the ratepayers' roll. I think the speech of the leader of the Opposition ought to be a warning to the temperance party; it ought to be a warning to the honourable member for Inangahua, and I wish to warn them. I say, by the course they are taking they are jeopardizing the women's franchise in another place—a measure which the Government and the majority of this House have passed; and I warn them not to persist in the course they are taking or they will be working into the hands of those who, like the leader of the Opposition, consider that the women of the colony should not have the right to vote conferred upon them. As to the vote of women on the ratepayers' roll, I at once dissent from what has been laid down by the member for Inangahua,—that they vote with the Liberal party and in support of Liberal questions. I at once say—and I have had some experience in this matter—that the tendency of the women who are on the ratepayers' roll as property-owners is to vote for the Conservative party.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I never said a word about the ratepayers' roll.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am referring to the remarks made by the honourable member for Inangahua. The honourable member has said of this Bill that it is taking away the powers of the Committee. I say the power of the Committee was taken away by the decision of the Appeal Court on the decision of Judge Denniston; and I might go further and say that the opinions previously held by the honourable member for Inangahua ought to have changed when the decision was given. What has given rise to the Bills which he has introduced to the House? I say they were the result of the decision of the Appeal Court; and I say that, the power having been taken away by the Courts of the colony, we were bound, and the honourable member was bound, to place the Committees in the same position that they were in before. But we have gone much further than that. If an indorsement takes place upon a license under the Act of 1881—I may say we have not altered that in the slightest—if a house has not been well kept, and if a license is indorsed, the licensee is subject to the same law as before. We have not altered the law in this respect one jot; we have not repealed that provision by this Bill, but more power is given to the Committees than they had.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Have you included section 5?

Mr. SEDDON.—It does not require to be included. That section is not repealed. The Committees have in that respect the same

powers now that they had before. We have gone further in this Bill, by adopting the amendment proposed by the honourable member for Heathcote, to the effect that the owner of the licensed premises must have in the house a person of good repute; and if he keeps a tenant, and that tenant does not conduct the house as he should do, the landlord has everything at stake;—and, in fact, he is bound to see that a proper and good tenant is in the premises. Then, we are told, as regards reductions, that reductions will not take place. I am astonished to hear such a statement from the honourable member for Inangahua. Sir, would honourable members believe it! although the power is already given to the people of electing the Licensing Committees, repeatedly Governments have from time to time been obliged to step in and appoint Committees, through the failure of the people to elect the same. This, Sir, has happened again and again, notwithstanding that the power of electing these Committees was placed in the hands of the people. It might be said that the privilege given to the people under the Licensing Act of 1881 was not exercised if the Government of the day were called upon to nominate these Licensing Committees. But we are now, by this Bill, enlarging the privilege, and providing against such failure by an extension of the boundaries of the districts, and so having the Committees elected from large districts. I say, too, that, as a consequence of this, you will have on these Committees representative men, and I will undertake to say that, with this class of men on the Committees, you will have the Act so administered that, for the first time in the Colony of New Zealand, it may be hoped that the sale of alcoholic liquor will be under direct control, and under regulations that will redound to the credit of Parliament and of the representatives of the people. Now, we are told that we have retrograded, and that when a poll has been taken it practically means that the licensed houses will be kept open for three years. Sir, I at once deny that. I say that under this Bill, once the poll is taken, the Committee that is elected will immediately have to make the reduction in accordance with the poll; and what I say and what I have told the country is this: that the decision of the electors who elect the Committee must be carried out. There must be, and there will be, consistency as to that. It is a foolish thing to say you will have electors saying there shall be a reduction, and then the same electors electing members on a Licensing Committee who will not carry out the reduction. I say it is unfair to assume anything of the sort. The position as put by the honourable member for Inangahua is unfair, because he forgot to take the country into his confidence and to say that those who vote for the non-granting of licenses and those who vote for reduction would be counted together for reduction; and I am convinced that that more than compensates for the cases pointed out by him where, in the event of there not being a sufficient number of votes, the election would

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be void. What has he argued, and what has the honourable member for Selwyn argued, from time to time? They have told us that, in electing members of this House, unless the member received an absolute majority of votes on the roll he ought not to be declared elected until another poll was taken or until such time as the candidate obtained an absolute majority.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—What we said was that unless a candidate received an absolute majority of the votes recorded he should not be declared elected.

Mr. SEDDON.—We will say there are a thousand votes recorded: one of the candidates must receive 501 votes, or else he is not to be declared elected. But if there are three candidates, and one of them gets 350 votes, and another gets 340 votes, and the third 310 votes—that is exactly what it says here.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—No, the two things are different. It makes all the difference whether you take the votes recorded or the votes on the roll. That is where the great difference lies.

Mr. SEDDON.—It is exactly on all four with that. In the case I quoted the highest number of votes recorded was 350: not being 501, the election would be void. We have three proposals here to submit to the electors; but in voting on these three proposals we say there must be recorded one-half the total number of votes on the roll. That is what we say; and I ask this—and this question has not been touched yet by any other speaker: How does this question affect the country from a revenue point of view? The honourable member for Inangahua said the question of administration was not here involved. I say the question of administration is involved. I say that it involves £60,000 a year of local revenue which is raised from these licenses, and that it involves £400,000 a year of colonial revenue received through the Customs. It is impossible for the Government, having that responsibility upon our shoulders, to allow a handful of persons in any electoral district of the colony to upset the local and general finances; and I say, therefore, to that extent and in that respect the administration of the country is involved, and that we must safeguard it, as, in fact, we have safeguarded it, in a way that is fair to all concerned. Then, I was asked the question as to who it was made a split in our party. If there is a split at all, I may answer at once that, so far as I am concerned, it is not I that have caused it; and neither is it the Government. Can the member for Inangahua say the same? I say that the Government could not accept the position which the honourable member for Inangahua asked the Government to accept: to see members dragged across the floor of the House, voting on the various clauses of the honourable gentleman's Bill during one, two, or three nights, knowing that obstruction would necessarily take place, and that it all meant simply a waste of time, and that ill-feeling would be engendered amongst honourable members. I ask the House whether, under these circumstances, the

Government would have been doing right in allowing all this to take place. I say that the Government were bound, in view of the magnitude of the interests involved, to take up this question themselves and to bring down a Bill dealing with it. We have done so. It has been a most difficult subject to deal with, but I believe the Bill will give general satisfaction to moderate people. I feel satisfied that the seats of those members who vote for this measure will not be imperilled at the next general election. I think, Sir, it is unfair for the member for Inangahua to say that such will be the case; it is unfair that, because members, after carefully considering the Bill, have done their duty conscientiously as representatives of the people, it should be held over their heads by a small section in the Colony of New Zealand—a section that is admitted to be in the minority, but a section who, I admit, are working in the interests of their fellow-men—that their seats were imperilled. I say that if that section of the community would be less dictatorial towards, and more disposed to reason with, their fellow-men it would be much better for the cause they advocate. But when they come to dictate to members of the House, when they import into New Zealand canvassers and lecturers, strangers, men unknown to the people of the country, who take upon themselves to dictate to the representatives of New Zealand as to how they should vote on this question, it does not say much for the intelligence of the people of New Zealand, and the intelligence of members of this House, if they allow themselves by such means to be swayed as to the decisions they may arrive at in regard to this question. I will not now say anything further upon this question; but I will just briefly recount, on what I think should be the final stage of this measure, the advantages that are to be gained on its becoming law. I feel assured that a good deal will be said during the recess on this Bill, and that a great deal will be said during the next election upon it. But I ask honourable members, and especially those who desire this reform, to consider the advance that has been made. Is it no advance that we have given directly to the people the right to say whether there shall be a reduction in the number of licenses, to say whether the licenses shall continue as they are, or to say that there shall be no licenses at all granted? I undertake to say that if I had been prepared to tell the convention of the temperance party which was recently held in Wellington that the Government were prepared to carry this Bill we should have had this convention, as I believe we had one lady, actually offering up a prayer for myself and the Government. If that convention had been told that we were prepared to do what has been done in this Bill, I feel sure they would have accepted it with gladness, and probably, under these circumstances, we should have found the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) opposing it. I think there is a great deal in this. When the honourable member for Inangahua first read the Bill, and after

he had carefully perused it, his opinion then was that there was a great advance made in this Bill as compared with the existing licensing-laws. There is no doubt whatever about that; and I am inclined to think that had the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), and the honourable member for Napier, and one or two others who represent the trade taken the extreme step of opposing the Bill in Committee—had they opposed the Bill at every stage—the probabilities are—in fact, I feel assured of it—that we should have had the honourable member for Inangahua at the back of the Government supporting the Bill. Probably in one or two clauses he would have moved amendments; but I believe generally we should have had his support. Is there nothing gained in taking away from the Government of the day the power previously given to it of creating special districts? We have taken that away altogether by the Bill now before the country and this House. Then, we have enlarged the boundaries of the districts. I think that that alone is a great advance as compared with the small districts we have under the present licensing-law. We have abolished 413 licensing districts, and now, instead of them, we have provided for sixty-two districts. And the Government have gone further and said that, if the changes as regards the elections mean an increased expense being thrown on the local bodies by reason of the increased size of the districts, we are prepared to ask the House next session to assist the local bodies, so as to meet the additional expense. Then, we have said, further, that there shall be a purging of the rolls. Experience teaches us that in country districts there is not that interest taken in the poll that should be taken. How easy, if the prognostications of the temperance advocates are verified, will it be then to come to the House next session and insist on having the law amended and made complete, simply by moving amendments in those sections that may have been proved to be defective! The issue is now narrowed down to the country districts, and I say that, so far as we have gone, the Bill is far in advance of our present legislation, and the results must prove beneficial. Then, Sir, the powers of the Committees, I say, have not been curtailed—they have been extended; and that, too, is a great improvement. Then there is the removal of the "incurable bias": that has been removed. The Government thought it was only right that those who were elected to the Licensing Committees should have every opportunity of carrying out the purposes for which they were elected, and that they should be allowed to vote according to their convictions; and in doing this we are supporting what is asked for by the champions of reform. I should have thought that, from the very fact that we were taking away the objection on the ground of incurable bias, it would be recognised at once that we were offering every facility for the people to determine, in the election of the Licensing Committee, how the trade should be regulated and dealt with. If it is to be done

at all it should be done now, because the licensing elections will take place, in any case, before the House meets again. During the next nine months you will have the elections of the Licensing Committees to hold office for the next three years; and the members of those Committees, if elected under the existing system, would probably grant an increased number of licenses: at any rate, to postpone this question till after the elections would have the effect of delaying for the next three years the powers given under this Bill. To allow the law to remain upon its present basis, with the non-removal of the incurable bias, is to abandon all that has been gained by the temperance party after years of agitation and good work. Then, Sir, what has been asked for with regard to the clubs?—and is that no advance of temperance reform? What power had we under the licensing-law as regards the clubs throughout the colony? And I say, with a due sense of the responsibility upon me for saying it, though there are clubs in the colony which are a credit to it, there are clubs in some parts of the colony which have no accommodation whatever—nothing but a reading-room, a billiard-room, and a bar; and these, during Sundays and week-days, are open and are dispensing alcoholic stimulants, not to members of the club alone, but to others who are brought there; and there are some, again, with respect to which we have records that there has been gambling going on, and, instead of being conducted as they ought to be, grave complaints have been made against them; numerous signed petitions have been sent in, and, after inquiry, though the police had not a chance of making an inspection, yet they obtained sufficient information to tell the Government it was high time something was done to remedy this improper state of things. The very fact of the clubs of the colony being placed under inspection and brought under control, I should have thought would have been considered by all temperance reformers a step in the right direction. I believe, in regard to this Bill, and the efforts to block its passage through the House, that it has been an attempt by a minority to dictate to a majority. I have assisted to maintain the true position of the House of Representatives—of the representatives of the people—and that is, that majorities must rule, and that there shall be no dictation on the part of minorities. I say there has been an attempt made to dictate to the majority by a minority, and I have properly resisted the same. I have been as reasonable as I could be consistently with what I believe to be my duty, and what is due to the people and to the good government of this colony. I hope it may never again fall to my lot to have to take charge of a Bill dealing with the liquor question. If I wished to punish my political opponents I could not do it more effectually than by giving them a Licensing Bill to get through the House. I told the House, on behalf of the Government, that I would bring in a Bill that would prove generally satisfactory; and in this I claim to have succeeded. I have

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not made it a party question in any sense of the term; and the support given has been given from conviction, and has been conscientiously accorded. But when we find that, after the determined opposition shown to this Bill—when one finds that outside the House agitation has been going on against it, and that that opposition is reflected here—complaints are being made that the Bill is being hurried through, I say the time given to the Bill has been such that it has not been run hurriedly through the House at all. It was recommitted; three days intervened; and the Bill has been before the House about a fortnight. This liquor question has really been before the House almost from the commencement of the session, and from the time the Direct Veto Bill was introduced. It has not been hurried, and there never was a measure that has had the same amount of attention devoted to it as has been devoted to this Bill. And this I say in conclusion: When we find a solid majority of twenty-two members supporting the third reading, I say the Bill is in accordance with the wishes of the large majority of the members in this House; it is, in my opinion, in accordance with the wishes of a large majority of the people in New Zealand.

Bill passed.

The House adjourned at ten minutes to three o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Thursday, 31st August, 1898.

First Reading—Third Reading—Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—Workmen's Wages Bill—Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill.

THIRD READING.

Wanganui Hospital Board Empowering Bill.

INDUSTRIAL CONCILIATION AND ARBITRATION BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—This Bill, or one almost identical with it, came before this Council last session. I do not think I should be acting wisely if I were to commence quoting the different clauses of the Bill, nor will I make a long speech.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I would suggest that the honourable member postpone his motion, as the minds of honourable members are full of another very important subject, and this Bill only came to our hands yesterday. I, as well as other honourable members, should like to have a little time to study the Bill before it is read a second time. I hope it will not make any difference to my honourable friend if he postpones it to another day. I know it is pro-

posed to send the Bill without debate to the Labour Bills Committee; but that is a subversion of the ordinary way of dealing with these matters, and I do not think any good result will follow the violation of the ordinary rule. I appeal to my honourable friend to agree to postpone the motion, and to put it down for another day.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I should like, Sir, to go on with this Bill. I do not think it would take very long, as I do not intend, for my own part, to give more than ten minutes to the second reading of the Bill, because it will go to a Committee where it will be threshed out. At the same time, I will defer to the general expression of opinion of this Council if, as my honourable friend appears to think, honourable members wish to have it postponed. I think, however, that honourable members will refrain from speaking at any length now on the Bill, as it is going to a Committee where it will be discussed thoroughly, and therefore much time will not be taken up. I am, however, in the hands of the Council. I am sure I do not know how to get that general expression from honourable members. I trust the Council will allow me to go on with the Bill.

The Hon. Mr. MCLEAN.—I hope my honourable friend will keep to the Order Paper.

The Hon. the SPEAKER.—This discussion is not in order.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Well, Sir, I think I shall have to go on. I was saying that this Bill was before the Council on a previous occasion. I will not take up the time of the Council by quoting the clauses of the Bill. I simply wish to say that these deplorable dissensions between working-men and employers have been very calamitous in their results. The men themselves have suffered very much, misery has been brought upon their families, and anything we can do in this Council to stop these calamities I am sure we will do. This Bill is essentially a conciliation measure. It is one to enable unions to consider matters affecting themselves and their employers. The representatives of these unions can meet employers of labour, and talk matters over at the table, free from excitement, and in an amicable spirit, so that they may arrive at a conclusion satisfactory to both parties. That is the object of the Conciliation Bill. In case they cannot settle a dispute amicably, either party can refer it to a Board of Arbitration, which Board is to consist of a member chosen by each party and a Judge of the Supreme Court or District Court, and their award is to be final. In these few words I have given the principle of the Bill. My desire is that it should be sent before the Labour Bills Committee, and then be considered in all its details. When it comes from that Committee the whole matter can be discussed at any length honourable members may think expedient, for this is a large and important measure. Having said this much, I should like to conclude my remarks with a few lines from a very valuable paper contributed to the *Contemporary Review* of September last by Mr.

John Rae. I will quote these few lines, with the object of showing how reasonable the representatives of labour have been in England, and what beneficial results have come from their deliberations; and then I will leave the matter, simply moving that this Bill be read a second time. I hope honourable members will not think I am unnecessarily trespassing upon the time of the Council, but I may say that this is very material to the subject:—

“But the Boilermakers and Iron and Steel Shipbuilding Society has struck out a most interesting and novel development in this direction. It guarantees the good faith of its members, and undertakes to compensate employers for their default. This important society was established in 1834, and has a membership of 37,300 in the United Kingdom, constituting 95 per cent. of all the mechanics engaged in the industry—virtually the whole trade, for the other 5 per cent. are men of indifferent character or skill, so that it enjoys a position of exceptional strength. Its affairs are governed by an executive council of seven, who must be members of ten years' standing and past officers of the society. They are elected not by the entire membership of the society, but only by the Tyne and Wear branches, and they all live in that district; but they settle disputes even in Scotland and Ireland, and, indeed, they seem to exercise without any demur a singularly absolute and autocratic authority. Other trades-unions resort to fines and expulsion when their members violate arrangements made for them by their union: but that is only a matter between the union and its members. This society engages with the employers for the fulfilment of the labour contract by its members, and for compensation in case of violation. At Hartlepool a vessel was lately being built in a hurry, and the men employed upon her thought it a good opportunity to strike for an advance of two shillings, in the teeth of the agreement under which they were working. The shipbuilding firm immediately wired to the executive council of the trades-union an account of the situation. The council wired back at once, asking them to pay the advance in the meantime, and proceed with the work, because they knew the vessel was needed in a hurry, and they did not wish to cause any delay; but when the vessel was finished the council compelled the men who had struck to refund the money, and then sent a cheque for the amount to the firm that paid it.”

Sir, this extract shows that the managers of the trade-unions can be exceedingly fair in their ideas. I beg to move, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—Sir, in deference to the wish that has been expressed by the Hon. Mr. Montgomery, I shall refrain from saying the few words I was prepared to say. The importance of the subject is so great that I think it deserves a very thorough examination, and no doubt we should have had an important debate upon it had it been allowed.

Hon. Mr. Montgomery

I am afraid, however, that we shall gain nothing really in time. That we must have a debate is quite certain, whether it takes place now or on some future day. Even the few words that have fallen from my honourable friend I cannot entirely accept; but under the circumstances I will refrain from entering into discussion of them, and defer what I have to say.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Sir, as a member of that Committee, I should like to see the opposite course taken to what is proposed. I should like first to hear the discussion in this Council on the merits of the clauses of the Bill. It would help to enlighten the Committee as to the way they should deal with an important Bill like this. If the Committee had the opinions of members of the Council when the Bill came before them it would help them materially. I should like to hear something from those honourable members who are acquainted with this subject, and who are familiar with it from personal experience. I am anxious that they should discuss this Bill before it goes to the Committee, and I should like to have their experience on it. I feel that this Bill itself looks very well, but it is not a Bill that I think will do much good. I do not know why you call a compulsory Bill a Conciliation Bill: because there is compulsion in it; and, notwithstanding the good intentions of the Bill, I do not see how it can be carried out. My honourable friend quoted from a newspaper showing how such a measure worked at Home. Well, Sir, I know a good deal about the working of these things, and I know this: that you find men who have become officers of unions begin to realise the responsibilities of their position. You find them endeavouring to stem the current. When they see that those responsibilities are greater than they imagined, and feel the responsibilities they have taken upon themselves, they moderate their ideas, and they begin to see that the views they held as common members of these unions cannot be carried out when they get into power. Often has it been that all those men who have found their responsibilities great begin to get moderate. Then they do not suit the societies, and they are replaced by some who are prepared to go ahead a good deal faster. It will always be so until the working-men of the colony realise that there is no mint behind the employer, but that the employer must make the money out of the public before he can hand it over to the men. And as the price of produce comes down, and everything comes down, when the employers of the colony get poorer and poorer, and have less money to pay out to the workers, the workers will have to be content with less; then again, as prosperity returns, the workmen will get the advantage of the increase. But trade disputes will never cease until the workers of this colony understand that behind the employers there is no mint to coin sovereigns, and that the employers have not got the sovereigns, and cannot make them, and that there is nothing for them but the Insolvent Court, and in that case the men will lose their employment. So that forbearance

on the part of the men is as greatly needed as forbearance on the part of the employers. As honourable members are well aware, I myself am connected with large labour-employing institutions. We have been endeavouring to treat those in our employ as men, have studied their feelings, knowing that they have feelings like ourselves, and whenever I have seen any affront to the feelings of the men by any one over them I have immediately checked it. If employers understood that the men have feelings like themselves they would work with them in harmony, and there would be less of these disputes we have seen here, and less of the difficulties and the strikes that have taken place. The result of the late strike is that the colony has not recovered from it yet, and will not be likely to recover for a long time. It will take a long, long time to get over those strikes. I have always explained to our men in this matter that unless we collect the money from the public we cannot give it to them. We have first to get it from the public; and the men know perfectly well, when they see ship after ship laid up and the men thrown out of employment, that there is no work for them—that we are not collecting sufficient. They see perfectly well it is impossible to collect from the public, and they realise the position, and accept it. We have had no difficulty; and if people are moderate and deal fairly with their men, things would be different. There are employers and employers. There are bad employers, who want to take advantage, if they can, of their men. There is that class of employers, and there is also that class of men who do not study their employers, but endeavour to screw the money out of them. It would be well if the people of the colony, both employers and employed, would realise the position and work together, and then matters would go on much smoother. Strikes, Sir, will do nobody any good. Disputes but react on the men themselves. And now I come to the class of legislation that has been going on. We have been endeavouring to check the employment of capital by all the legislation we have been passing. Now, are we in a position to do that? Is the colony in that prosperous condition which will enable us to do that? Supposing the colony were prospering, and work plentiful, and there were not sufficient labour to accomplish the work, then you could pass all these laws, and restrict everything, and all would be well. But that is not the case; and the people of this colony, the workers of this colony, will soon begin to realise that all these restrictions—I do not mean necessary restrictions, but all these unnecessary restrictions—stop the employment of labour; and I hope the public of this colony, and the workers of this colony, will soon realise that that is what they are doing. That there will be a great reaction I am perfectly satisfied. Sir, if the Bills that are coming forward were some of them reasonable Bills nobody would say anything against them; but they are not. I am referring more to other Bills, such as this *Workmen's Wages Bill* which comes next. I

do not intend to speak on every Bill; I will take them together.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The honourable gentleman is referring to another Bill.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I am allowed to refer to it by the indulgence of the Council, and it will save me from getting on my legs to speak on the Bill that follows this Bill. I say that such a Bill as the one that follows this Bill will prevent people from going on with work that they would otherwise do. What we have to do in times like the present is to encourage people by every means in our power, and endeavour to find labour for the people, and then you will have work for your labourers and prosperity for your country. Coming to this Conciliation and Arbitration Bill—the provisions of this Bill—I notice the way in which it is to be worked as regards the industrial unions. In my opinion this requires amendment. It is proposed in this Bill to register the unions. That is all correct. And then it is proposed that no one shall be allowed to resign his membership in a union for three months, and then he must have paid up the back amount. It is proposed to allow the unions now in existence to be registered under this Bill. Let me show how that would work. There are certain unions, Sir, which keep the men on the roll, and they cannot get off again. They simply cannot resign. They are simply non-financial members—that is, if they do not pay. They are still kept on the books, and they are non-financial. If you brought them in as proposed in this Bill you would have a number of men with a year or two's subscriptions in arrear, and you would compel them to pay up the whole of that amount, even though they had been out of the union for the previous two years. I say you would compel them under this Bill to pay the whole amount of the subscriptions for those two years.

An Hon. MEMBER.—They would be only paying their debts.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—It is not paying their debts. I would make every one pay his debts. But that is not the point in this case. These people whose case I am dealing with have left the union long ago. But under this Bill they cannot resign; they are simply non-financial, and they may have been out of the union for years, and by this Bill you can go and collect from them the subscriptions for those years during which they have been practically out of the union. I do not think the Legislature will allow that. Those connected with the unions know perfectly well that, while the unions were in existence, as far as I am concerned I never had any complaint to make against the unions. We worked with them and they worked with us. When they broke up the unions I did not want them to do it, and, in fact, I pleaded with them not to break them up, pointing out to them that the action they were taking would have the effect of breaking them up. Their leaders then, I will say, discussed the whole thing fairly. They came to the office day after day and discussed the question with us; and it was their feeling that

they were tied up with those in Australia, and would not dare to show their faces on the other side if they did not call their men out. Now, that was the position they were in. They were forced into the action they then took against their own better judgment. I think, if this Bill is to pass, the best thing we can do is to cut out the part relating to arbitration, as we did the last time this measure was before us, and leave in the conciliation part, so that the people may take advantage of it if they choose. I believe, if it were taken advantage of, it would have this effect: that if the Board of Conciliation decided a matter fairly, and the men did not agree to the decision, or the employer did not agree, the force of public opinion, if it thought them wrong, would compel them to accept the decision. I would decide who was in the wrong, and leave the rest to public opinion. I do not like to take up the time of the Council at any length in discussing the Bill at its present stage, but I thought it was necessary, knowing the position I hold, and seeing that I know a good deal about this matter, that I should say something on the subject. I do hope that honourable members will discuss the Bill well before sending it before the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG.—I shall have something to say later on in regard to this measure. I did intend to say something at the present stage, but I recognise that it is our duty not to do so, out of deference to the honourable gentleman who moved the second reading, and who has not gone into the matter as he might have done had he believed a debate would take place. Under these circumstances, I will reserve my remarks until after the Bill has been before the Committee. I quite agree with the Hon. Mr. Oliver that the time for considering it has been very short. I do not know how other honourable gentlemen act under the circumstances, but I purposely refrain from considering any measure that is before the members in another place. I prefer to wait until it comes before us in this Chamber, and so avoid any confusion of ideas which might arise under other circumstances. The Bill has been before us but a very short time, and I can quite understand that any one who is not thoroughly up in the question may be placed under a very great disadvantage.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I think it is very unfortunate to have to discuss this Bill to-day, when there are two or three other important Bills under our consideration. This Bill involves two very important principles, and I cannot help thinking it would be a decided advantage—if a consensus of opinion prevailed in any particular direction in reference to the Bill—that the alterations to be made should be made in the Committee to which the Bill is to be referred, instead of being first debated in the Council here, and then we could discuss the Bill on going into Committee of the Whole. With regard to the question of conciliation, of course it has my entire approval; but it is a curious circumstance that when I introduced a Bill in that direction in,

I think, 1889 the greatest opponents of that Bill were those parties who are now so strongly advocating this Bill. Those members in the other branch of the Legislature who are now advocating with enthusiasm not only conciliation, but arbitration, were bitterly opposed to the proposal I then made: and the reason for that is obvious. At that particular time it was thought the labour party were all-powerful throughout the colony—that they could boycott and make laws for themselves, subordinating the employers, and practically bringing everything into subjection to themselves. Then they found by bitter experience that that could not be done, and they fell back upon this conciliation, coupled with arbitration. Now, as I have already stated, this question of conciliation has my entire sympathy, and I agree with the Hon. Mr. McLean when he says, if you have the machinery established for conciliation, public opinion will pronounce itself quite unmistakably against the person who refuses to submit to that tribunal; that, in fact, it will have more force than the judgment of a Court of law. With regard to this question of compulsory arbitration, it is well known that that is a very debatable question, not only in Great Britain, but in America. We have not yet reached the stage of arbitration in any of the colonies. It does not exist in England, although tribunals for conciliation have existed there for a considerable time, and I am not aware that it has existed in any of the American States. I was reading some little time back a book entitled "The Voice of Labour," and I have studied it with very great interest, and I must say that the problems that are being worked out in America are being worked out on very broad lines. I feel satisfied that the representatives of labour in England, as well as a very large percentage of the leaders of what might be termed the "labour party" in America, are opposed to compulsory arbitration. There are many considerations which might be urged in support of that view. The subject has been very fully discussed in some of the American periodicals during the last few years. I have had my attention directed to one article in the *North American Review*, in which the subject has been discussed very fully. I have not had the time to prepare any arguments against this compulsory arbitration, but I may state that I have always had what I believe to be a fair and impartial consideration for the interests of both parties, knowing that the welfare of all is the welfare of the colony. But my present opinion is against compulsory arbitration, and, unless I am shown good reasons to the contrary, I intend to support the excision of that part of the Bill which relates to compulsory arbitration.

The Hon. Mr. PHARAZYN.—This Bill is practically the same Bill that was before us last year, and the course then adopted by the Council was to make it as little harmful as possible, by cutting out that part of it which was concerned with the establishment of Courts of Arbitration. It appears to me that this is

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very likely to be the course adopted by us this year also, especially as the Bill must go before the Select Committee, without any previous discussion in the Council as a whole. Well, Sir, I confess that I have not in any way altered the opinions which I held last year, and which I expressed in speaking upon the Bill, and also by the vote that I gave upon it. I believe that the whole principle of the Courts of Arbitration is a mistake—that, in fact, it is a perfect delusion to suppose these Courts will have any good effect. On the contrary, I believe they must have a very bad effect indeed, especially on labour. The effect will be rather negative than positive. The adoption of such a principle will tend to prevent the investment of capital, and will thereby diminish the wages fund, and altogether will affect the labouring-classes in a very severe manner. I do not propose to discuss the Bill before us at any length, as it seems to be the wish of the Council that there should be no debate at the present stage. I only wish to point out that the whole principle of the Bill is to affect or to fix the rate of wages—either to fix the amount a man is to receive for his labour, or to limit the time that he is to work for his wages; and it practically comes to this: that, while it seeks to increase the wages, it stops short of fixing the price of commodities. If we could fix the price of commodities as well as the rate of wages, there might be something in it; but it is perfectly clear that this is impossible, for we cannot force the consumer to pay more for an article than he is prepared to give, or the producer to accept for his goods less than will yield him a reasonable profit. The same thing applies to other services, for, as the Hon. Mr. McLean has pointed out, it is quite clear that such a company as the Union Steamship Company could not be forced to pay a higher rate of wages than they can afford to pay. The question is determined in this case also by the consumers, or, rather, by the persons for whose convenience the kind of work performed by the Union Steamship Company is carried on. That seems to me to be so perfectly obvious that I am surprised such a strong feeling should exist as I believe does exist in the country, especially amongst the trade-unions, in favour of this measure. Indeed, I should not be at all sorry to see the measure passed as it stands, simply because I think it is so hopeless to reason with the people who believe in it that I am convinced that experience alone will open their eyes. All classes of people in the colony would then realise that it is quite wrong: I think, if the Bill should pass, that will be the experience they will have. Although I should feel bound to vote against the Bill, I say again that I should be pleased to see it passed as it stands, so that the country might have practical experience of the mischievous effects of this kind of legislation. There are various clauses in the Bill upon which I should like to say something. There is, for instance, the question of the Railway Commissioners, which is a very important subject in itself. I believe it would be a most disastrous measure to intro-

duce such a system as is provided for in this Bill in connection with the working of our railways. It would certainly lead to great mischief, and possibly accidents might happen from which the public would suffer, and it certainly would lead to a loss of revenue and to general mismanagement. I think, also, that no Judge, either of the Supreme Court or of the District Court, is especially qualified to pronounce opinions and to give decisions upon ordinary questions of business, and such a proposal seems to me to be a most preposterous one. The Judges have no special knowledge of or training in such matters. The idea that, by examining an employer's books and seeing what profit he makes, on that basis you can fix the rate of wages, shows a perfect misunderstanding of the laws which govern the rate of wages throughout the country. It is perfectly true that, in the long-run, taking all kinds of employment together, the rate of profits and wages are necessarily connected; but, if you take any one particular industry, it does not at all follow that, because a man is making a large amount of profit, therefore he must divide it amongst all the men he employs. It depends upon the supply of and demand for labour, and it seems to me to be perfectly unreasonable to suppose that, in such an extremely complex question as the rate of wages throughout the whole community, such a thing could be done. The whole thing is extremely complex, and can only be worked out by the ordinary competition of industrial pursuits. I cannot understand how it can be thought to be possible that any Court can, by simply investigating some particular case, decide such an enormous question as is involved in all these questions of wages, and in all matters between employer and employé. I shall not take up the time of the Council, however, on the matter; but I do hope that the members to whom the Bill is to be referred will consider it carefully, and, if they do see any point on which something like a compromise may be arrived at, that they will endeavour to modify it. I, however, feel that there is nothing for it but to allow the country to gain experience by letting the Bill practically remain very much as it is. There may be some little points here and there in connection with which it is possible to make it less mischievous, but, on the whole, I believe it will really be the best thing to leave it to its operation.

The Hon. Mr. KERR.—Sir, like the last speaker, I trust that the Bill, or, at any rate, the conciliation and arbitration parts of it, will become law. It has received a considerable amount of discussion by the representatives of the people; and the working-men of the colony support and approve of the Bill, and they are the best, in my opinion, to determine on such matters. If it prevents a repetition of the strikes we have experienced in past years it will be good not only for workmen and employers, but for the colony generally. We have never recovered from the strikes that took place some few years ago. Many employers and workmen were then ruined throughout the

colony, and the colony went back considerably. Anything we can do to prevent a recurrence of such a thing by passing these measures we ought to do. As far as the arbitration part of the Bill is concerned, it is evident to me that there will probably be very little arbitration at any time. When employers and workmen know that their case will be decided by arbitration they will reason together, and come to some mutual arrangement before proceeding to the law-courts. The employer must be sure of his ground as well as the working-man, and, before they submit their case to a Supreme Court Judge, they will endeavour to mutually agree, and to understand each other on the question. But, knowing that, if they do not agree, their case will be tried by a Supreme Court Judge, they will be satisfied to have that just tribunal to decide their case. I will not take up the time of the Council now, or trouble honourable gentlemen to listen to me further on this matter. The Bill will, no doubt, receive every necessary consideration, but there are several clauses that I shall refer to when in Committee.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—Sir, after the nice, moderate, sensible speech of the Hon. Mr. Kerr, I am very sorry that the old custom in the Council should not obtain on this occasion, and that we should not have proceeded to debate the Bill on its second reading, which affirms the principle of a measure. We have of late years been drifting into a custom which I think may prove very prejudicial to the best interests of the country. We were influenced in this course, I submit, by the consideration of the agitated feeling that existed in the country at one time, and by our desire to impress on the country generally the sense we entertained that the gravity of these large questions necessitated their receiving consideration. The exceptional circumstances seemed to justify us in departing from our usual constitutional procedure, and therefore at that time we agreed to refer this and similar measures to Select Committees, that they might be calmly and dispassionately considered by these Committees before being discussed in the body of the Council. If any necessity existed for adopting this course at that time, it has happily passed away. An epoch of reason has now arrived, and we are here together most favourably placed to educate each other to the importance and the character of the intricacies of these large questions. I was most anxious to hear my honourable friend Mr. Rigg on this subject. I am anxious to receive instruction at the hands of these honourable gentlemen, and to impress upon them, to the best of my power, the views I entertain; and I feel that it would have been much better for us to go fully into the whole question, because I hold that this Bill is of far more importance than the Bill we have recently discussed. In any case, the principle of female suffrage which was affirmed by this Council yesterday would sooner or later have become law in this country. I merely wished to delay its introduction. Still, I recognised that, as there is such a passion for

change in the colony, this change would sooner or later be affected. But here is the greatest problem of modern times submitted for the consideration of the Council; and where is there a body better qualified to consider it? We are not influenced by passion; we are a fairly mixed-up gathering of employers and employed, actuated by the sincerest desire to do what is best and right, and encouraged in the pathway of duty by the highest sense of mutual respect. Under the circumstances, I regret sincerely that this measure should not now have been fully threshed out. I want time to study the arguments of my honourable friends. It would have been to me a privilege and an advantage to have taken days to consider what they could have alleged in the matter. I am now in the position of a man who must go against the sense of the Council as expressed, or be forced—as I am not a member of the Select Committee—into the mistake of coming rapidly to a decision on the measure. I trust this method will not be persisted in by the Council. I foresee results disastrous to the best interests of the country. I am quite sure it is not fair to the country, and it is not fair to our honourable friends in this Council, to deprive them of the opportunity of affording us ample time to consider the reasons which they are no doubt prepared to submit for our consideration in order to justify our carrying this measure.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—Sir, it is a most extraordinary thing that nobody apparently—not even the cleverest young politicians in England—can make any suggestion for the settling of any trade dispute except this one of conciliation and arbitration. It appears that nothing else can be done except this *brutum fulmen* of conciliation and arbitration. Conciliation? Yes; it is a very proper thing, undoubtedly, for us to encourage in every possible way. Arbitration? Yes; supposing that arbitration meant anything, which it certainly does not. The remarks of the Hon. Mr. Pharaayn just now made me think how very impossible it must be to hope ever to settle anything in this sort of manner. The honourable gentleman said, "It has been stated that if an employer is making large profits it is his duty to share those profits with his workmen." That would be a perfectly good argument supposing, if he were making a loss, that those workmen were to make it good; but that is what they will not and cannot do. In the coal famine in England, one of the largest firms in the West of England—the Fotheringhams—announced to their people that they must reduce their wages, because they were working at a loss. Their people said, "Show us your books. We will appoint a committee, and if you show a loss we will submit." The Fotheringhams refused to do anything of the sort; they would on no account show their books. Well, the work-people said, "There is proof positive that the firm have been misrepresenting things to us, and are not working at a loss; and they have no right to reduce our wages." Well, the feeling ran high all over England, and almost

Hon. Mr. Kerr

everybody in the mines went out on strike. Well, in the end, through the action of a gentleman who was well known in New Zealand—Mr. Brogden—the workmen gained their point, and all the miners went to work again, and the higher price of coal enabled the employers to pay wages until trade got better. Almost immediately after this—after the employers had given in because one or two of the association broke faith—the Fotheringhams went bankrupt, and it was found that they had been working at a loss for seven years, and the only reason for their not wanting to show their books was that they had been paying far too high wages for seven years, and it would not have been possible for them to continue if that fact had been known in financial circles. This only shows just this one point: that employers, having to stand losses, must be allowed sometimes to make gains. Then comes the question of conciliation and arbitration. It is impossible to make an employer pay wages which he cannot afford and which the men do not earn, and it is also impossible to make the labourer take what he is disinclined to accept. Therefore, as to any compulsion, it is all nonsense. Then we come to the question of appointing a Judge of the Supreme Court. I have a very great objection to that. We have very few Judges, and they have a great deal of work to do, and it is most desirable that the country should have perfect confidence in these Judges. There is a large portion of the community with whom they might become exceedingly unpopular if they were placed in this position. If they gave decisions in favour of the employers they might be accused of favouring the wealthy classes; if, on the other hand, they gave decisions in favour of the men, they might be accused by the employers of toadying to the *profanum vulgus*. It is not at all a desirable position for a Supreme Court Judge to be placed in. At the same time, it is obvious we should not have any Judge placed in the position, as was said a little while ago, of a temporary Judge—one having his salary placed on the supplementary estimates, so that if he were a good boy he would get his salary voted, and if he were not it would not be put on the supplementary estimates. And it would not do to give the work to District Court Judges. I think we saw something of that not long ago. It is very hard, Sir, to suggest any person who would be altogether suitable for the office. I should prefer, myself, to see the Controller and Auditor-General, or his Deputy, act. They are statutory officers, and they would have a great deal more knowledge of matters of this kind than any Judge of the Supreme Court would have. I think, to properly carry out the principle of the Bill, it would be far better to allow each party to elect their own arbitrators. It must always, however, be a matter of honour with both sides as to whether they accept an award of the Court. It would involve the willingness of the men to work. And in the case of the employers, if there is no money, even if the award should be against them, how are the winners to get it? These are diffi-

culties with which the Committee will have to deal. I do not say that this is not as good a Bill as I have seen drafted anywhere else, for I have not seen any proposal in England or anywhere that exactly meets what I should like. I suppose we shall have to get over the difficulties in the best way we can. I certainly object to that part of the Bill about railway employes. I am sorry it is in the Bill at all. I look upon this as a well-intentioned proposal, but it is one that will require most careful consideration in Committee.

Bill read the second time.

WORKMEN'S WAGES BILL.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—Sir, I only intend to speak for a couple of minutes in moving the second reading of this Bill. It is a very short measure, and it is intended to provide that workmen shall be paid once a week, and that, under certain circumstances, the employer shall hold the money due to a contractor, and pay claims for wages to workmen. I will simply move, *That the Bill be read the second time, and be referred to the Labour Bills Committee.*

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I hope my honourable friend, when he replies, will be so good as to inform the Council what change is proposed to be effected by this Bill. Last year we passed a Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Bill, which provided a considerable degree of security for wages amongst other things; and that Act is referred to in this Bill. In point of fact, I see, by the very imperfect glance which I have given to the Bill in the limited time at our disposal, that this Bill is made subject to the Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Act of last year. Well, I do not desire to provoke any debate on the present occasion, but I do not think it would be too much to ask my honourable friend, at all events, to give us some kind of idea for our guidance as to the intentions of the Government in regard to any change in the law. I am not in a position to say that I have gathered what is proposed to be effected by this measure.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—I may say at once that I am not thoroughly acquainted with the Bill of 1891—I state that frankly—and I do not know to what extent this Bill will affect it; but I know the Bill itself, as far as I have read it, seems a perfectly reasonable, fair, and just measure. It is going before the Labour Bills Committee, and will be there considered; and if it is not an improvement, and does not make any alteration in the present law, and is not required, the Committee will report accordingly. I do not think my honourable friend should raise this objection.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I raised no objection.

The Hon. Mr. MONTGOMERY.—All I know is that it is a good Bill, and I have no doubt that the Committee will take care to thoroughly discuss and examine it.

Bill read the second time.

ELECTORAL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 8.—Aliens, public offenders, and defaulters disqualified.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved to insert in line 30, after the word "offence," the following words: "nor any person who has been convicted of being an habitual drunkard, or against whom there is an unsatisfied order of the Court for the maintenance of his wife, or children, whether legitimate or illegitimate, or who has been convicted of having committed an aggravated assault on his wife within one year."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 15.

Bonar	Kerr	Stevens
Bowen	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Peacock	Walker, W. C.
Hart	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Jennings	Shrimski	Whitmore.

NOES, 20.

Acland	Kelly	Pollen
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Richardson
Bolt	McCullough	Rigg
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Walker, L.
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.
Johnston	Pharazyn	

Majority against, 5.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 9.—Registered male elector qualified as a member.

The Hon. Mr. L. WALKER moved, That progress be reported.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 14.

Acland	McLean	Walker, L.
Bonar	Oliver	Wahawaha
Dignan	Pharazyn	Whitmore
Hart	Richardson	Williams.
Kelly	Stewart	

NOES, 16.

Barnicoat	MacGregor	Reynolds
Bolt	McCullough	Shrimski
Buckley	Montgomery	Stevens
Jenkinson	Ormond	Swanson
Jennings	Pollen	Whyte.
Kerr		

Majority against, 2.

Motion negatived.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG moved, That the word "man" be struck out, for the purpose of inserting the word "person."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Jennings	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

NOES, 15.

Bonar	Peacock	Swanson
Feldwick	Reynolds	Walker, L.
Kelly	Richardson	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Rigg	Wahawaha
McLean	Shrimski	Whitmore.

Majority for, 8.

Word retained.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at a quarter to nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Thursday, 31st August, 1893.

First Readings—Second Reading—Third Readings—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—Egmont County Bill—Harbours Bill—Native Land Purchase and Acquisition Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Halswell River Drainage District Bill, Blind Asylum Reserve Bill.

SECOND READING.

District of Palmerston North Hospital and Charitable Aid Board Empowering Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Dunedin Garrison Hall Trustees Empowering Bill, Christchurch Hospital Bill.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish, with the leave of the House, to make a very short personal explanation. I may state that I arrived from the South yesterday by steamer, and was in the House here till two o'clock this morning. I left then; and I understand that, because I left and did not wait for the speech of the Premier on the motion, "That the Bill do pass," fault was found with me for so leaving. I left the House because I had come up from the South by steamer in the afternoon. I understand the Premier said that I had asked him to postpone the third reading till Wednesday, and, after getting this concession from him, I left for the South and stirred up public meetings against the Bill. I asked him when the third reading would come on—would it be on Wednesday? He said, "Yes." If he had decided upon an earlier day I should not have left Wellington. As to the statement that I had stirred up meetings against the Bill, it would have been a legitimate thing if I had done so; but I did not do so. That statement is entirely without the slightest foundation in fact. When I arrived in Dunedin on Saturday night a deputation waited on me, and stated that a meeting was being held at the Octagon, and that another meeting was to be held on Sunday

evening, and asked me to attend. I consented to attend, and on the Sunday night I did attend the meeting. I had nothing whatever to do in calling any meeting; and I deeply regret that a gentleman in the position of the Premier should make statements that have no foundation in fact.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable member is entirely incorrect. It was he who came to me in the lobby, and asked me what course I was going to pursue in regard to the Bill. I said the Government wanted to get it through and have done with it. He informed me he was going down South, and asked me if I would postpone the third reading until he returned. I asked him when he would be likely to be back. He said, "On Wednesday." I said, "Very well; I will postpone the third reading until Wednesday." I am under the impression I can call several members to bear me out in that statement.

Sir R. STOUT.—What statement?

Mr. SEDDON.—The statement was that you said you were compelled to go down South—that you would not be back till Wednesday; and you asked me to postpone the third reading until you returned, as you would like to be present when the third reading took place.

Sir R. STOUT.—Do you remember the words I used?

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly. You said you were going South, and that you wanted to be present when the third reading took place. I say I could not be under any wrong impression, because, as both sides of the House know, the Government had kept back all other business in order to go on with this Bill, and it was not in keeping, after getting the Bill through, sitting night after night, that I should suddenly postpone the Bill for three days if the request had not been made. I say that, whatever the honourable gentleman's impression may have been, the application came from him to postpone the third reading of the Bill until he returned, and I ask the honourable gentleman whether he did not express to me a wish to be present when the third reading took place.

Sir R. STOUT.—I said so.

Mr. SEDDON.—Very well; I said it was only generous on my part, the honourable gentleman having expressed that wish, to meet him and to postpone it; and I postponed it accordingly. Then I chaffingly remarked to him—and perhaps he will bear this out—"I suppose during the time you are away the agitation against the Bill will commence."

Sir R. STOUT.—No, no; I do not remember that.

Mr. SEDDON.—The honourable gentleman says "No, no"; but I took it for granted, and in fact it happened exactly as I anticipated. We saw in the Christchurch papers that a meeting was held there, I think, as soon as the honourable gentleman landed in Christchurch. He landed on Saturday, and a mass meeting was held, of which no notice whatever had been given; and a mass meeting was held on the following day. Then we see that there was some requisition, and that meetings were called in

Dunedin, and we see that the honourable gentleman addressed those meetings.

Sir R. STOUT.—Only one.

Mr. SEDDON.—I may be wrong if I said two, but I simply said in the House what I say now: I have nothing to withdraw. I postponed the third reading of the Bill to meet the wishes of the honourable gentleman, and, after having so postponed it to suit his convenience, I think it was ungenerous on his part not to have remained to the close of the debate, because, one is put to a disadvantage when he has to reply to an honourable member who has left the Chamber.

Sir R. STOUT.—Allow me to explain. The honourable member has apparently not heard my explanation. I would have remained if the honourable member had adopted the course usual in this House ever since I knew it—namely, to reply on the third reading. The course adopted by the honourable member is unprecedented. And further, as I explained to him, I had come up in the steamer in the afternoon, and I thought that waiting until two o'clock was long enough.

Mr. SEDDON.—I claim the right of reply to those remarks. The honourable member has been a long time out of this House. If he will look to the records he will see that I simply in this respect carried out what was done before I became Prime Minister, and before I became a Minister at all. The practice was adopted years ago; and the honourable member knows full well that the right of reply rests in the Minister or member who is in charge of the Bill under review, and that the reply is usually made at the last stage. Had it been made on the third reading I have no hesitation in saying that we should have had the honourable member speaking again on the question, "That the Bill do pass."

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman is now entering into new matter.

Mr. SEDDON.—I wish to say that I have adopted the usual course—that I took the course that has been ruled to be correct, and which is in accordance with the Standing Orders.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is not the usual course.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I would ask you, Sir, if you would really give a ruling upon the question as to how the convenience of Parliament and business is best promoted in respect to this renewing of debates on the question, "That the Bill do pass." My own opinion is that it is an entire innovation; and I have been a great many years in Parliament. It is an extremely inconvenient practice, as is shown by this debate, and it is quite clear from what has just transpired that this custom is likely to lead to the introduction of matter to which no possible reply can be given: and that is a most unfortunate circumstance.

Mr. SEDDON.—Then, I would ask Mr. Speaker to rule on this question: After the Minister or member in charge of a Bill has replied on the third reading, can any member, on the question "That the Bill do pass," again

speak on the question, and refer to the debate that has taken place on the third reading? If you will rule that that cannot be done, I shall be only too glad in future to follow that course, and would prefer so to do.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I spoke on the question of good order, and what has been the custom that has always ruled Parliament up to the present time, without its being strained in the way there has recently been an attempt to strain it.

Colonel FRASER.—I would point out to the leader of the Opposition that it was a member of his own Government who allowed the first introduction into Parliament of this pernicious practice. On the District Railways Purchasing Bill Mr. Hislop was the first since I entered the House to allow the practice referred to.

Mr. SEDDON.—I am glad the honourable member has mentioned this, because it only bears out what I have previously said, that during the time I have been in the House I have always known it to be done.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If honourable members will turn to May, ninth edition, page 582, they will find the following authority:—

“Occasionally a Bill is read a third time, and further proceedings thereon are adjourned till a future day; but the general practice is to follow up the third reading with the question, ‘That this Bill do pass.’ This question has sometimes passed in the negative, after all the preceding stages of the Bill have been agreed to; but, though debates and divisions have occasionally taken place at that stage, it is not usual to divide upon it; and of late years the question has gradually fallen into disuse as formal and superfluous; and if it be put in the case of a severely-contested Bill no amendment is permissible.”

If honourable gentlemen will read further on, they will find not only that the question referred to here—namely, “That the Bill do pass”—is not put in the House of Commons, but also that the question, “That this be the title of the Bill,” is not put by the Speaker unless it is intended to move an amendment; and at the bottom of page 582 instances are given in which debate took place upon the question, “That the Bill do pass.” One was on the passing of the Reform Bill of 1831, another on the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1851, another on the Succession Duty Bill of 1853, another on the Bribery Bill of 1854; and the last cited is on the Education (Scotland) Bill of 1855. So, at any rate, it seems that more than a quarter of a century has passed since the date of the last reference. Nevertheless, there is nothing to show that the question cannot be debated in any Legislature having its institutions on the model of those of the House of Commons. Now, unfortunately—I do not know whether I should say unfortunately, but, at any rate, it is the fact that we have not adopted the new Standing Orders of the House of Commons; and the practice of the House of Commons which we have to follow is the practice that was existent at the time when our original Standing Orders were adopted—that is,

Mr. Seddon

something like thirty years ago. Hence, the modern precedent of the House of Commons of dropping the question, “That the Bill do pass,” does not avail us. Therefore, in this House, my predecessors have always put the question, “That the Bill do pass.” In the other branch of the Legislature, where they have different Standing Orders, it may be noticed, if honourable gentlemen will look it up, that they do not put the question, “That the Bill do pass”; and when I was asked by the late Premier to consider the question of the Standing Orders, and to submit such amendments in them as I thought desirable, among others that I recommended was one to bring the practice of this House into conformity with the practice of the House of Commons in this particular, and I am strongly of opinion that it would be greatly to the advantage of the House that this and some other amendments should be made. Until that amendment has been made, my duty, of course, is to put the question as it always has been put, “That the Bill do pass,” and, that question being put, it follows that it may be debated, because the motion may be negatived, and the Bill may be thrown out: the whole Bill is at stake. And it only comes to be a question, Is there a right of reply, and who has it? I am of opinion that the formal question put by the Speaker presumes that it has been in effect moved by the person in charge of the Bill. If that be so it would follow that when the person in charge of the Bill has spoken that would close the debate. I am quite willing to take the matter into further consideration, because I see that the practice that is growing up in the House is one calculated to lead to a great waste of time, and my own impression is that the House would do well to decide that there should be no debate on the question “That the Bill do pass,” but that the debate should close with the third reading.

Mr. SEDDON.—That being your view, Sir, I will take an early opportunity of placing the matter before the House by a motion amending the Standing Orders so that the reply to the third reading of a Bill shall finally close the debate. As long as we know that to be the ruling of the Speaker, we shall know where we are.

Sir R. STOUT.—I understand, Sir, you have stated you will consider the matter. Would you allow me to point out—though, no doubt, your attention has been drawn to it—that in Standing Order 327 there is this statement: “The order of the day being read for the third reading of a Bill, the motion is made and the question put”? Now, in Standing Order 329 there is no provision for the motion being made, and, consequently, I submit to you there can be no reply, because there is no mover of a motion; but you yourself put the question simply, “That this Bill do pass.” If any person speaks on that, there is no right of reply, because there is no right of motion. I ask you to consider that.

Mr. SPEAKER.—I will take that into further consideration.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—That was the point raised the other day.

EGMONT COUNTY BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Mr. FISH moved, That progress be reported. The Committee divided.

AYES, 33.

Allen	Meredith	Shera
Buckland	Mills, C. H.	Smith, W. C.
Buick	Mitchelson	Stout
Carncross	Moore	Tanner
Dawson	Newman	Taylor
Earnshaw	Pinkerton	Thompson, T.
Fergus	Reeves	Ward
Hall-Jones	Rhodes	Wilson.
Kelly, J.	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake	Sandford	Mills, J.
Mackintosh	Seddon	Thompson, R.
McGowan		

NOES, 19.

Blake	Mackenzie, M.	Taipua
Bruce	Mackenzie, T.	Valentine
Duncan	McKenzie, J.	Wright.
Fish	McLean	
Hall	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Rolleston	Harkness
Kapa	Swan	Hutchison, G.

PAIR.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duthie.	Hamlin.

Majority for, 14.

Progress reported.

HARBOURS BILL.

This Bill was considered in Committee, and reported with amendments.

On the question, That the amendments be considered that day week,

Mr. FISH said he would like to place it on record that one of the most extraordinary proceedings which he had ever seen in his life, so far as his parliamentary experience was concerned, happened in Committee on this Bill. When the Bill went into Committee it was a Bill of two clauses, and those two clauses were struck out, and nine new clauses were passed through Committee in two or three minutes. He thought Mr. Speaker would admit that that was rather an extraordinary thing to take place in any Legislature. They were told that the new clauses were exactly to the same effect as the new clauses which had been struck out: that was to say, they were asked to believe that it took nine new clauses to express the same meaning as the two did. The clauses had been hurriedly read through, and nobody could possibly understand their meaning.

Mr. ALLEN, as a point of order, desired to know whether it was right that a local Bill which had gone before the Local Bills Committee as a Bill of two clauses should in Committee of the House have nine new clauses substituted for the two clauses. He did not know whether the clauses had been advertised in the district.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had not had time to read the clauses, nor even to see the effect. The clauses might be, for aught he knew, simply an amplification of the original clauses of the Bill. If, however, they were of a totally different purport they could not be introduced. Motion agreed to.

NATIVE LAND PURCHASE AND ACQUISITION BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, in rising to move the second reading of the Bill now before the House, I must say that I wish it had fallen to the lot of some member more conversant with the subject of Native-land legislation and purchase in the North Island than I am myself to move the second reading. This Bill is for the purpose of enabling the Government to get for settlement, either by purchase or by a process of leasing through the Crown, Native lands in the North Island. It is not intended that it shall be in any way compulsory on the Natives to dispose of their land to the Crown. It is entirely optional on their part to do so.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh!

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—An honourable member says, "Oh, oh!" but he will find that in this Bill there is nothing compulsory; and we are quite prepared, if any member of this House thinks it is so, to so amend the Bill in Committee as to make it clear, and put it beyond all doubt that there shall be nothing compulsory in the Bill. Honourable members, I have no doubt, and the whole population of this North Island of New Zealand, must have now arrived at this conclusion: that the time has arrived when it is necessary that something should be done to enable the large areas of Native lands in this Island to be made more productive than they are at the present time. We have arrived at that stage in the history of the colony when it is impossible for us to remain, as it were, quiet in this matter—to allow those large areas of Native lands to remain in the position they are in at the present time. We have at the present time an area of something like seven millions of acres of land in the North Island which I may put down as unproductive—yielding nothing to the Natives themselves, doing no good to the colony, and, worse than that, to a large extent blocking the settlement of the Crown lands of the colony. Now, it is quite evident that we cannot much longer remain in this position, and it is our duty to endeavour to legislate in such a manner as will give to the people of the colony an opportunity of acquiring portions of these lands for settlement purposes, and to do so in such a way that no injustice will be done to the Natives themselves, who are the owners of the land. Then, Sir, the question arises, How can this be done? How can we arrive at some legislation which will enable these lands to be used in a reproductive manner, to be made use of for settlement and to assist the colonisation of the country, and at the same time yield to those Natives to whom the land really belongs fair and honest value therefor? Well, the Govern-

ment have come to the conclusion that it is possible to do this,—that it is possible to acquire large areas of land for settlement purposes and, at the same time, to do no injury whatever to the Native owners. We think it can be made conducive to the best interests of the colony that some of these lands should be acquired from time to time as settlement can proceed and as applicants arise who are prepared to take up the land and make good use of it for settlement purposes. This Bill which we submit to the House provides the machinery that we think is necessary to do this; but, as I said before, the measure itself is not compulsory. I am sorry to say that an impression has got abroad amongst the Native members and amongst a large number of Native chiefs throughout the colony that this is a compulsory Bill—that by it they are bound to sell.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Why does it say so if it does not mean it?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It does not say so. If the honourable gentleman will only study this Bill carefully he will find that, although the Natives are required at a certain time to state whether they are prepared to sell, or give a lease to the Government of, certain areas of their land, if they do not elect to do one thing or the other there is nothing compulsory in the Bill to make them do it. The Bill is not compulsory, and the honourable gentleman will find that out. Now, Sir, when the Natives are called upon to elect what they will do in this matter, if they do nothing, then things will remain as they are, and, of course, the land cannot be acquired by the Government; and the honourable gentleman will find that there is nothing in the machinery of this Bill which will enable the Government to step in and say to the Natives, "Unless you do so-and-so we will take this land compulsorily." It is just possible that the one word, "require," in the 7th clause, may have caused the impression on the minds of the Native members and other people who are interested in the subject. But, if so, there is nothing to prevent the amending of this Bill in its passage through Committee so as, as I said before, to make it clear and distinct that there is no intention whatever to take Native lands compulsorily. But we have to face this difficulty, and I have no doubt members of this House who know anything at all about the Native mind and the views held by the Native people will recognise that something must be done to bring them face to face with the question of whether these large areas of land are to be held in a manner conducive to the best interests of the colony, or whether they are to remain as they are at the present time—lying idle, useless to the Europeans, and yielding nothing to the Natives themselves. The Native people, I may say, are very prone to procrastination and delay in matters of this sort. We always hear from them, when any legislation affecting them is brought up in this House, "Delay this measure for another year." I think I have heard that hundreds of times in this House since I have been a member.

Mr. J. McKenzie

The general cry is, Delay—delay till next year, so that the Natives may consider it. If we, year after year, delay legislation in connection with Native matters, I am sure we shall never get anything at all passed, and I am sure the Natives themselves must acknowledge this fact: that legislation has gone through this House which has conducted very largely to their benefit, and yielded them considerable income. There is no desire whatsoever on our part to do them any injustice, or to take their land from them. In the opinion of the Government something must be done to fix the time when the Natives shall be called upon to make up their minds as to whether they will make good use of their land, or allow good use to be made of it by the Government of the colony and the people of the colony. This Bill, if passed, in my opinion, will give a new start to the North Island of New Zealand. You will have a new area opened up on which settlement can be proceeded with in a very different manner from that which obtains at the present time—that is, if we can get some of these Native lands for the purposes of settlement, and I have no doubt we shall be able to get some very large areas under this measure if it becomes law. In the past history of Native-land legislation in the North Island, so far as I can gather, any one of small means—any settler with two or three hundred pounds—wishing to settle on Native land in the North Island was debarred from coming near or touching Native lands at all. No private individual could get hold of Native land in the North Island unless he was prepared to acquire it on a large scale—to buy a large block: to resell it at a much higher price than he paid for it himself. This Bill, if it becomes law, will enable Natives to say, "We will place our lands in the hands of the Government of the colony; they will then be able to get our land sold for us, and it will give us an assured income year after year." It will enable a larger number of purchasers to take advantage of these lands than was the case in the past owing to the various restrictions regarding the disposal of Native lands. I am sure every member of the House who has had anything to do with Native-land legislation and Native-land transactions will admit that we have in the past had too much of the middleman and the speculator in dealing with Native lands; and it would, in my opinion, have been a very good thing for a very large number of gentlemen who went into the purchase of Native lands in the North Island had they never touched it themselves. What do we find to be the case in this colony? There is hardly a Court where there are not disputes and lawsuits, in which are being settled large questions in connection with the purchase and sale of Native lands; and the effect is that a large portion of the purchase-money of these lands goes to the lawyers of the colony. There is under this measure, if the Natives consent to sell to the Government their land, or to hand it over for lease, a security that they would get for themselves an assured rental; and not only

for themselves at present, but for their children afterwards. The Natives would benefit in this way, and the colony also, as under this measure we should not require to find large sums of money for the purchase of Native land, while at the same time the State will be able to throw open for settlement large areas of country. What I mean is this: If the Natives come forward and say they are prepared to lease their lands under the land-laws of the colony, we shall not require to find money to purchase: at the same time, the colonisation of the country will go on, and settlement of land will proceed in due course. Then, Sir, there is a very important matter in connection with this disposal of Native lands in the North Island, and that is the question of making the surveys of the lands, and roading them. If the land is purchased by the Crown,—that is, if the Natives elect to sell any portion of their land,—it becomes Crown land, and will be dealt with under the land-laws of the colony in the usual way; and consequently provision will have to be made for roading the country, and enabling settlement to take place.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—When does the survey take place?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The survey is, of course, made as the lands are given over to the Crown; but if the Crown purchases a survey must be made before the purchase is concluded. If, on the other hand, the land is to be leased, then the Crown will acquire a certain proportion of it for the purpose of paying for the surveying and the roading of the country, thus enabling the Natives to get full value for the balance of the land. One very important matter we have to look at on this subject is the continuity of road-making throughout the country. I am sure every one connected with the country, every member connected with the Native districts, and the honourable members opposite who have been connected with the administration of the country, will admit with me that we have had great difficulty up to the present time in making roads through Native lands, in some cases, to more distant Crown lands. I myself have seen blocks of very valuable land owned by Natives which have had to be surveyed by Government for the purpose of making roads through them to get at Crown lands beyond. Thus, by making a road to open up our own country, we are adding considerable value to the Native lands, for which we have received nothing. And the same thing would apply to local bodies in regard to dealing with the opening-up of country under their control in the North Island. Each local body finds the same difficulty. We hear from all sides that, owing to the large areas of Native land in their midst, they are not able to raise sufficient rates to keep up the roads. The construction of roads by these local bodies, and by the colony, adds value to these Native lands, while at the same time they get nothing in return. Now, this will be put an end to under this system, because we shall have the power to continue the road-

making of the country, not only, as done sometimes at the present time, through the Native blocks, but making roads through Crown lands to Native blocks, and adding value to them in that way. I have no hesitation in saying that if the measure now before the House becomes law, with perhaps some few amendments which may be found necessary, it will prove beneficial not only to the colony as a whole, but also to the Natives themselves; and I would impress this matter upon the Native members of the House: that they cannot stand much longer in the way of settlement with those lands belonging to them. Unless they are prepared of their own accord to open up land for settlement they must be prepared to hand it over to the Crown at a fair and reasonable value, for the purpose of being opened up for settlement. The colonists of New Zealand will not stand much longer the cost of making roads to Native lands for which they receive nothing, and they will not stand large areas of land lying unproductive while they are themselves adding value to those lands in the way of colonisation. We cannot stand the fact of the population which comes here and adds value to these lands being driven out of the country for want of room while these lands are lying unproductive; and I would impress this upon the Native members: that they must be prepared to do one thing or the other; they must either be prepared to survey and open up the lands themselves, or to hand them over to the Crown to do so. Now, we know perfectly well that it is impossible for the Natives to do the first; they have neither the machinery nor the staff necessary to do so, and in many cases they have not the means to do it. And what we want in the Bill is that they shall elect for themselves whether they are prepared to sell to the Crown, or to hand their land over to the Crown to be leased, for the people to settle on, and to pay a fair amount of rent. I think they should make up their minds to face this question, and treat the House and the Government in a fair and reasonable spirit in dealing with this very important question. Now, Sir, having made these few prefatory remarks with regard to the reasons which have induced the Government to bring in this Bill, I may say that the Bill itself as a whole contains the necessary machinery to enable the views of the Government to be carried out. Honourable members will find that for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act we establish a Board called the Native Land Purchase Board. On this Board there are to be the Surveyor-General, the Commissioner of Taxes, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands for the district where land is proposed to be acquired under the Act. Then there is provision that the Native member of the House of Representatives for the electoral district in which the land is proposed to be acquired shall also be a member of the Board; and then a Native owner, to be called a Maori Commissioner, is to be appointed by the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court, on recommendation supplied by members of the Legislature represent-

ing the Natives. This provision is in clause 8. Then, after this Board is created, the Government will have the right of issuing a Proclamation over land to which this Act will apply; and no doubt any Government which has the administration of this Act would be careful that the Proclamation should not be issued over any area of country except such as can be made good use of for settlement purposes. Then, the Board is to report to the Government as to the character of the land and its suitability for settlement, and as to its value. This in itself is of very great importance, because before anything is done in the shape of acquiring any of these lands these questions must be first settled: as to whether the land is suitable for settlement or not, and as to the nature of the land and its real value. Then, the Bill provides machinery for ascertaining the value; and I think in this connection it gives full justice to the Natives; it gives them every opportunity of seeing that their lands are properly and fairly valued before they are called upon in any way to deal with them. Then, on these conditions being complied with, the Governor may require the Natives to elect whether they will sell any of the land to the Government, or whether they will hand it over for settlement purposes. The Native owners may elect what they will do; and here I may say that the Bill is not compulsory, because, supposing the Native owners of the land do not elect either to sell or to lease, there is nothing to compel them to do so.

Sir R. STOUT.—What is to happen?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Things just remain as they are.

Sir R. STOUT.—Can they lease to anybody else?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—No; so long as the Proclamation is there they cannot deal with them. However, the honourable gentleman will have an opportunity of giving us his views on the question, and many members in this House are far more qualified to deal with the question than I profess to be myself, for it is almost a new subject to me.

Mr. W. KELLY.—You are doing very well.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—However, I never grumble at any work which may fall to my lot, and I am going to have a try, at any rate, at this business. If the Native owners of the land fail to make up their minds, they can take a vote of the Native owners, and the decision come to by the majority would be binding. "The majority" would mean the Natives owning more than one-half of the value of the land proposed to be dealt with. This, I think, is only fair and reasonable, so as to give an opportunity to a majority to dispose of the land, if they thought necessary to do so. Then, if the Natives elect to sell the land to the Government, it becomes, of course, Crown land; and we shall pay for it by debentures or in cash, and the owners, if they choose to take up debentures for the value of the land, will receive fair and reasonable interest on their money. If, on the other hand,

they should choose to lease to the Crown, or allow the Crown to deal with the land under the land-laws, then they will have to give a certain area of land sufficient to cover the cost of surveying and roading the land. This is provided for in the Bill accordingly, and when that is done then the rent arising from this land will be handed over to the Natives for a time; when, after a time, a majority of them, if they think it necessary, can sell any portion of those leased lands to the Crown, and the Government, in that case, will simply become the trustees of the Native owners of the land, and will see that they get what is right, fair, and honest. There can be no loss whatever to the Native owners. The Government will be prepared to see that the rents are fairly and honestly paid. We say this: that, if the Natives are prepared to offer to us a block of land, and if the whole of it is not disposed of, we are prepared to find the interest on such portions as are not disposed of at once until the land comes to be settled upon: that is, we shall be prepared to find a certain amount of interest on the land which may not be yielding anything at the time. At the same time, the price of the land will have to be paid at a future date, when the land shall come to yield a profit to the owners and to the Government. Then, we have made ample provision here, I think—and if not ample it can of course be amended as it goes through Committee—to enable the Courts to decide who are the Native owners of the land—that is, who are entitled to receive value in debentures or cash, or the rents of the lands to be leased. Then, there are provisions made to guard against any number of Natives being rendered landless; and their cultivations, under this Act, will be retained for their own use. Provision is made also for children and others who may not be able to act for themselves. There is also ample provision made as to the manner in which money shall be paid, and to whom it shall be paid, and to see that full justice is done to the Natives in every respect. Now, the measure will be submitted to the Native Affairs Committee for consideration, where it may be studied clause by clause. The Native members will have an opportunity of being present, so that their views may be made known in the matter. I think, then, this House will agree that it is only fair that the second reading should be allowed to proceed, and that the Bill should be submitted to the Native Affairs Committee, where I have no doubt it will receive careful consideration. My honourable colleague Mr. Carroll will be present at that Committee, for he understands the Native mind and the Native temperament better than I do; and he will have an opportunity of explaining to the Natives the objects of the measure in all its details. I may say that I am very much indebted to my colleague, Mr. Carroll, for the construction of this measure, as he has had a great deal more to do with it than I have had myself, although it has fallen to my lot to take charge of it to-night. That honourable gentleman is much more conversant with it than I

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am, and he will be able to explain it to the Native members of the House, and to others of the Native race who may be interested, and also to the House generally. Sir, I move the second reading of the Bill.

Captain RUSSELL.—Sir, I do not propose to occupy the attention of the House very long in speaking on this Bill. I differ so entirely from the whole policy of the Government on the question of dealing with Native lands that on this occasion it is not my purpose to review this Bill at all in detail. As I came into the Chamber this evening, shortly after the half-hour adjournment, I heard the honourable gentleman who is moving this Bill warning the Natives that they must not delay this Bill until next session, and saying that it was always the cry of the Natives to delay matters until the next year. Sir, the Natives are perfectly justified in raising this cry. Why do they say, "Delay this Bill till next year"? The reason is perfectly obvious. These Bills are invariably brought down when our minds are so filled with other business that it is perfectly impossible that we can give full attention to a subject of such paramount importance to the Native race and to the whole colony. When the session is far advanced, and honourable members have become jaded in their intellect, this mighty subject is put before us; and the Natives are warned, forsooth! that they must not ask that the Bill be delayed until next session. If the Government desire to deal with a question of such great importance they should bring down their Bills on the first day of the session; and not only that, but all the provisions of those Bills ought to be made known beforehand, not only to honourable gentlemen representing the Native race in this House, but to the Natives themselves from one end of the colony to the other. The question of the administration of their lands affects not only their present material welfare, but the whole future of the race. If the race is to be kept in leading-strings, as is proposed to be done by this Bill, the knell of the doom of that race is inevitably rung. It is only by trusting the Native people to manage all Native affairs, under such restrictions as this House may impose, even to the final alienation of their lands, that they can be advanced to any degree of civilisation. If their lands are to be perpetually tied in the hands of the Public Trustee, or in those of a Board so numerous that it is almost impossible to remember the names of the various people who are members of it, then you sap the independence and the powers of origination of that people, when you require them to remain in a state of tutelage which it is time they had passed through. We were told that this Bill was not compulsory. I understood the Premier, not long ago, in the course of an interview with a Native deputation, to say that it was not compulsory by any means. Well, if not compulsory, the Bill simply means, "If you do not choose to do what we tell you, you shall do nothing else." That may not be compulsion, but it is something very like it. The Minister

of Lands tells us that he has only recently taken up the subject of Native matters, and that he is not very conversant with it. He also informed us that he never refused to take in hand any subject that might come before him. Does he not know the old adage which says that certain persons rush in where angels might fear to tread? I do not believe in this Bill; I disagree with it from beginning to end. I do not believe that we should take away, as this Bill does, the rights which we have granted to the Native people. We have seen in the local papers lately what rights those people were granted by the Treaty of Waitangi. It is our duty to treat the Native people, as nearly as we possibly can, as we would be treated ourselves. Our endeavours and our policy should on all occasions be to place the Natives on identically the same plane as ourselves. The question of Native-land administration is before us in various Bills, which I may not refer to; but I do not think I shall be transgressing the rules of the House if I mention that there is—as the Natives were informed by the Minister of Lands just now, when he warned them that the Europeans were no longer going to tolerate the occupation of their lands without due taxation—a Bill before us this year to impose direct taxation on the Natives; and I do not think it is quite right that the Natives should be placed on exactly the same footing, as regards taxation, with the same responsibilities, as ourselves, if we do not give them at the same time the same privileges as ourselves. But this is not now proposed. And then we are told, Sir, that the speculator has done incalculable harm to the Natives. In many ways the speculator has been a benefit to the Natives, and in many ways he has not. If any one will take the trouble to read through some of the records in the Native Department he will find that those charges, frequently calumnies, which have been hurled at the land-speculator might be hurled with greater force, and with equal justice, at the Government Native-land-purchase officers. In past years the Government absolutely issued instructions to their officers as to the price they were to pay for valuable land—a price per acre a great deal less than the land-speculator has ever paid. They were actually censured if they paid a price which, if given by a private buyer, would be denounced as a very small one: they were told that it was an extravagant price. If we give power to the Government to control the prices that are to be paid to the Natives, the Natives will not, at any rate, benefit by enhanced values. I believe the opposite will be the effect, and the price which will be paid by the Government will be considerably less than that which would be paid by the speculator. I am not here to speak as an advocate of the speculator. I realise, to begin with, that the whole opinion of the country is against land-speculation, and therefore I put it aside as being a point unworthy of argument on the present occasion. Sir, is it possible to think that the Government can compel the Natives to sell their land? I venture to say it is not so. But the Government, to

be just to the Natives, and in order to bring about the settlement of the lands of the colony, must agree to some scheme which will allow the Native to sell, and the individual or Government to buy on an indefeasible title. The expense involved under such a scheme will be considerable; but it seems to me the duty of the Government to enter into such expense. To begin with, we must recognise fully that a considerable amount of money will have to be expended by the Government to enable the Native lands to be individualised, or "hapuised," if I may coin such a word. But I would take care that the land was subdivided in such areas that the person who has been alluded to by the Minister of Lands, the man with a small sum of money in his pocket, should be able to go and buy Native land if he thought it wise to do so. I would have it Crown-granted in areas, say in no larger area than one square mile, or, at most, a thousand acres, unless the land was very poor. It should be Crown-granted to an individual Native, or bodies of Natives. I think that the expense of survey should be charged to the lands surveyed, but I should be glad if a certain portion of it could be borne by the Government of the country, as this is a national and not a local question. In the more fertile districts the lands might be subdivided into smaller areas, and this would be of benefit both to the Natives and to the Europeans. The Natives would be able to get enhanced prices for their lands on account of numerous buyers, instead of having, as in many cases, to accept small sums from the speculators. It has been said that this is attempting an impossibility. But any difficulty can be got over by the appointment of a considerable number of Land Court Judges to inquire into the titles. At present, suppose a Court sits, say, in the neighbourhood of Wellington: a Judge, having examined one case, may be despatched possibly to somewhere in the North of Auckland. Instead of that, the Judge should be given a Court at some fixed centre, and should there remain, instead of having to adjudicate upon the titles of various pieces of land dotted about in various districts. It should be his duty, first of all, to let it be known throughout the district that on a certain date he would open his Court. Ample time should be given, and notices should be inserted in the *Kahiti*, and in different papers far and wide, both in the Maori papers and in the European, that on a certain given date the title to the piece of Maori land nearest where the Court was sitting would be inquired into; and, after having examined the title of such piece of land adjacent to the place where the Court was sitting, the Judge should proceed also to inquire into the titles of the pieces of land next adjacent, and so onward. There can be no doubt that if this were done the Judge would become equally well acquainted with Maori titles throughout that district: that is to say, he would become acquainted with the various hapus directly interested in the different lands in the various localities,—he would work out in ever-widening circles. So soon as the Native title was extinguished over a piece

of land the Native owners would be in the position of being able to occupy it themselves if they chose, or, if they did not so choose, they would be able to sell it to the Government or to a European, or to lease it. In any case, the land would be enhanced in value by its recognised title, and would be placed in the same position as land held by Europeans. It would be subject to the same rates and the same taxes. The Native would be able to lease it or sell it to the European or to the Government, or to occupy it himself individually, or do whatever he liked with it; and there would be no harm in calling on him to pay rates and taxes, just as if he were in the occupation of his land himself. By following that course, we can quite understand that there would be no difficulty with the Natives, either here or in the King-country, or in the more remote portions of the colony. The Natives would assent to such a scheme, and there need be no difficulty anticipated, for this reason: that it would take several years, working outwards, to get into the more remote centres of the Island. By this means—by the Natives leasing their lands, or by their keeping it in profitable occupation themselves—we should increase civilisation among them. It would show them that the aim of the Europeans was to endeavour to do them no injustice, but to treat them so that they may become one people with ourselves, with equal rights, equal responsibilities, and equal privileges. I believe that the legislation of the Government generally, in dealing with the Natives, is not in the direction I have imperfectly sketched, and is injurious to their independence and spirit of self-reliance, and ought not to be agreed to.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—Sir, the Minister of Lands, at the beginning of his speech, in moving the introduction of this Bill, apologised to the House for not having had much experience in dealing with Native lands, and he expressed the wish that it had been left to some other honourable member to take charge of it. That would not have occurred, and there would have been no reason for the honourable gentleman's remarks, had the Government filled up the position of Native Minister, as they ought to have done weeks ago. The honourable gentleman, in introducing the Bill, explained its provisions, and showed very clearly that he was very well acquainted with the details of the Bill he had introduced; but the funny part of it is that when the Bill was first introduced into this House it bore the name of Mr. Carroll, and I think the House would like to understand why the Minister of Lands and not that honourable gentleman has taken charge of it—why Mr. Carroll had not moved the second reading of the Bill. This requires some explanation.

Mr. SEDDON.—The Minister of Lands has been in charge of the Native Land Purchase Department for the last few months.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—I could understand that, had the Bill proposed to deal exclusively with the purchase of Native lands, that, probably, might have been an excuse for the Minister of Lands having introduced it. But it

does not. The honourable gentleman told us that this Bill was not compulsory in its character, and the Premier also took it upon him to inform a number of Native chiefs who waited upon him that the Bill was voluntary and not compulsory. I have read the Bill very carefully, and I have no hesitation in stating that no man who read the Bill could say that it is voluntary in its character. It is compulsory, not only in clause 7, but in several other clauses, to which I shall presently refer. I shall endeavour to show the honourable gentleman that he has contradicted himself by saying that the Bill would be voluntary in its operation. The honourable gentleman told the Natives before, and has also drawn attention to the fact when moving the second reading, that if they did not deal with their lands themselves the Government would take action. This was in itself a veiled threat. The honourable gentleman was no doubt right in stating that the time had arrived when Natives could not any longer be permitted to retain in their occupation such large areas of land, without disposing of them or bringing them into profitable use. The honourable gentleman has informed the House that after the Bill has been read a second time it is his intention to move that it be referred to the Native Affairs Committee. That being so, it will prevent my dealing with the Bill at the length I first intended to do. As a member of that Committee I shall have an opportunity of dealing with the Bill there, and I have no doubt that, now that that Committee has been strengthened by the appointment of several members of this House who previously occupied seats on that Committee and who are thoroughly conversant with Native matters, the Bill will receive every consideration at their hands, and I have no doubt that when it comes back it will have been put into the right shape, and that it will receive fair consideration, which will make it acceptable not only to the members of this House, but also to the Natives themselves. I do not propose to deal extensively with the provisions of the Bill, but I think it only right to point out to honourable members one or two of what I think are its most objectionable features, according to the manner in which I read them. Sir, the Bill has not been translated for more than two or three weeks, and it has not been circulated to any great extent, if at all, throughout the country. I venture to say that there is a very large number of Natives that are personally interested who want to know something about it. There are many of them who do not or cannot understand the provisions of the Bill, and do not even know that such a Bill has been introduced into the House. I am of opinion that the Government, in bringing in this Bill, should have taken steps to have it translated into the Maori language at an earlier period of the session, and they should have taken the trouble to see that every Native throughout the country who had any land, or any interest in land, had been made acquainted with the provisions

of the measure we are now dealing with before it had been introduced into the House. There are a number of Natives and chiefs assembled in Wellington at the present time, and I have no doubt that many of the petitions that have been presented to the House this session have emanated from them. The Native members have presented a considerable number of petitions. Some of them that have been read urge the House and the Government that the present Bill should not be proceeded with, and that it be not allowed to pass into law this session. I have no doubt that when these petitions come before the Native Affairs Committee they will receive careful consideration at the same time as the Bill is first received. If the Government have any intention of passing this Bill in its present form, I should strongly advise them to proceed no further with it than the second reading this session. I am convinced that, if the Native members feel that the intentions of the Government are not such as are conducive to the interests of the Native people, they will use every effort to prevent this Bill from becoming law this session. I am not going to oppose the Bill at this stage in any shape or form. Whatever opposition I have to offer will be made before the Committee. I think the Bill should be read a second time, and go before the Native Affairs Committee, and when the Bill comes back honourable gentlemen will have an opportunity of discussing its provisions. Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman stated in his speech that the Government are going to take the power, through the Governor, to proclaim any Native lands which it is considered desirable to acquire in the interests of settlement; and, in answer to an interjection, he stated that such Proclamation would be the means of preventing private persons from dealing with the lands. I understood the Premier to state that if the Natives objected to any portion of their lands being proclaimed, and made an objection to that effect, the Government would be prepared to remove such Proclamation. The Government have already taken power to proclaim land for certain purposes under the Native Land Purchases Act of last year, and therefore I see no necessity for the same provision being in this Bill. In the past Proclamations have been made over Native lands strongly against the desire of the Natives, and there has been considerable litigation in consequence, and rarely if ever has a Proclamation been removed. And I believe that wherever a block of land is chosen as fit for settlement it is absolutely necessary in the interests of the colony that that land should be proclaimed, in order to prevent its getting into the hands of speculators; but, if the Natives are unwilling to sell to the Crown, then the Proclamation should be removed. There is another question with regard to these Proclamations. In clause 26 of the Bill, I think, where it re-enacts practically the pre-emptive right, it is stated that those lands that have not been proclaimed cannot be purchased by private persons until the Queen or the Go-

vernment have declined to purchase those lands that practically lock up the whole country. Now, Sir, the honourable gentleman has admitted that, although clause 7 as at present drafted is probably of a compulsory character, the Government are prepared to accept an amendment in that clause which will make it voluntary. I understood the honourable gentleman to say that.

Mr. SEDDON.—To make clear the intention.

Mr. MITCHELSON.—If the Government are prepared to accept an amendment which will declare the fact that this measure is to be voluntary, and not compulsory, I do not think the Native Affairs Committee will have much trouble in dealing with it. But I have no doubt this clause specifically states that the Natives have either to agree to sell to the Queen, or lease under the provisions of the Land Act of 1892. There is no doubt the clause as drafted most distinctly states that, and there is no getting over that fact. Now, Sir, clause 7 is no doubt the principal clause in the Bill, and I am quite convinced that if it is allowed to be passed in its present form grave and serious consequences will arise from it. Now, there is another clause in the Bill which is of a compulsory character, and that is clause 12. Clause 12 states that, if the majority of the owners of the land agree to sell to the Government, the minority who do not wish to sell have to abide by the will of the majority, who have power to sign away the land of the minority; and, in the event of those who are not desirous of selling or who do not care to sell to the Crown objecting to receive the purchase-money, the Government then take power in another clause to invest this money through the Public Trustee in the interests of the Natives concerned. There is another clause which I look upon as of a compulsory character also, and that is clause 13. Clause 13 gives the Governor in Council power to order the Native Land Court to investigate the Native title to land—that is to say, that if there are any blocks of Native land in the country that have not been adjudicated upon and the acquirement of which the Government consider necessary in the interests of settlement, and if the Natives decline or refuse to make application for the investigation of title, the Governor may order an investigation of the title; and there is an addition to the clause which states that, after the title has been investigated, “all costs, charges, and expenses of, and incidental to, the carrying into effect of the provisions of this section shall be borne and paid by the Native owners, and shall be a charge upon such Native lands in favour of Her Majesty.” At the present time, if the Natives make an application to the Court to have their titles investigated, no such charges are made. Now, I do not think that when the Government are going to take power to compulsorily adjudicate on Native titles against the wish of the Natives they should saddle the land with the cost of so doing. The Bill, no doubt, will be very fairly and fully considered

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by the Native Affairs Committee; and after amendments have been made in it, and the Bill is reported to the House, honourable members will then have a further opportunity of discussing it. Meanwhile I shall refrain from making further comment upon it. As far as I am concerned, I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to hear that the honourable gentleman has come to the conclusion to support the second reading of this Bill. I am also pleased at the tone of his remarks, because they must be somewhat reassuring to the members of the Native race representing the Maoris in this House. Sir, this is one of the most difficult questions that this Government, or any Government in the Colony of New Zealand, has, or may have, to deal with. And what the Government, in dealing with the question, determined upon was, that we would do justice to the Native race. At the same time, we must also do what is right in promoting European settlement in the colony. And the necessity for dealing with this question year by year becomes all the more apparent. It is, I say, a standing blot on the legislation and the administration of Native affairs in this colony to see our Native brethren rich in lands, but otherwise, wherever you meet them, poor, and, I regret to say, in some cases living in a state of semi-starvation. And when we look to the cause, when we ask ourselves what has brought this about, it would appear to be that no attempts have been made, or, rather, that no sufficient attempts have been made, to give the Natives an opportunity of disposing of their lands to Europeans through the Government in such a way that their rights would be preserved, and that they should get the fair value for the land. Sir, the Bill now before the House sets forth that the very first thing to be done is to appoint a Board, composed of men who will act fairly and impartially to the Natives, and that this Board will fix what is the value of the land. Now, the price for land acquired in the past from the Natives has been, I say, abnormally low. I say, without fear of contradiction, that the Natives have, in many instances in the past, not got from the State a fair value for the lands they have parted with. We have passed laws dealing with Europeans on exactly the same lines as in this Bill: that is, under the Land for Settlements Act of last session, we decided that where land is required for settlement purposes Europeans can come to the Government and say, “We are prepared to sell these lands, and are prepared to take a certain price for the same.” Then, there was set up a Board of Commissioners, and the Board had to say whether or not the price at which the land was offered was fair and reasonable, and such as the colony should pay for the land. We therefore appoint a Board in this Bill—the Surveyor-General, the Commissioner of Taxes, and the Commissioner of Crown Lands in the district. We also appoint a Native Commissioner; and, so as to insure that in all parts

of the colony all the Natives shall have fair representation, we have provided that this Native Commissioner shall be taken from a list that is to be supplied by the Natives representing the Native race in the General Assembly. The appointment is to be made by the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court—that is, the selection from this list. There may probably be some objections raised to the Chief Judge being the one to make this selection; but that would be only a Committee objection, and we are prepared, if it is possible, to give the work of selection to a Judge of the Supreme Court if it is thought that to leave it to the Chief Judge of the Native Land Court would not meet with general approval. The Government only wish, I may say, to get the selection of the Native Commissioner made by some person whom every one—Natives and Europeans—can trust, by giving the appointment to some impartial person of the Native race, being a Native owner, and one acceptable to them. Then we give the direct representation of the member. We say that every three years when we have elections the member who represents that particular part of the colony in the House of Representatives must be one who has the confidence of the majority of the Natives in that district. Hence the reason why he is placed upon this Board. Now, I say that by a Board so composed you will have the fair value of the land ascertained, and then, when that is ascertained, the Natives can say to the Government whether they are prepared to sell or whether they are prepared to let. Looking at the Bill, I admit that the wording of it—the words which I say might have been made clearer—the word “require,” and the words “the Natives shall elect to sell or lease”—I admit that these words might be taken as indicating compulsion. Were it not for the election which takes place, in the subsequent clause it might be taken as if the Government were saying, “You must sell to us.” But that clause is not supported as to compulsory taking by any other part of the Bill. There is no compulsory taking contemplated—it is not asked for. Members of the Native race, or those who say that it is compulsory, will see that wherever there is a compulsory taking of land the machinery for so doing is provided. Look, for comparison, at the Land for Settlements Act now in force; look at the Public Works Acts, where the power is taken by the colony to compulsorily take: but you cannot find in this Bill a single word of any machinery whatever for a compulsory taking. The whole principle is voluntary. Some days ago I assured a deputation of Native chiefs—and the word of the Government is given—that there was no intention of taking compulsorily, that the Bill does not take compulsorily, that the purchases to be made under it are intended to be voluntary: and voluntary they shall be. Now, I would ask, therefore, what objections can reasonably be made to the Natives having their lands valued and having the values assessed by an impartial Board? There can be no possible harm whatever in that course

being pursued. As the honourable member for Inangahua put the question very pertinently to my colleague, “After the Proclamation is thrown over the land, and the Natives have been asked to elect whether they will sell or lease, if they make no offer to the Government, what then?” There is the other course, and that is the withdrawing of the Proclamation; and if you withdraw the Proclamation, then, under section 26 of the Bill, power is given first to the Natives to offer to the Board any of the land outside the proclaimed area, and, if the Board are not prepared to accept that land, then the Natives can sell to persons outside the Government, subject, of course, to the restrictions herein mentioned.

Sir R. STOUT.—With the consent of the Board.

Mr. SEDDON.—That, of course, is the restriction, and a necessary restriction, because it might be found that speculators and others might be offering a price to the Natives which, if the Natives had offered the land to the Government at that price, probably the Government might accept. This is a very important thing, tending, as it does, to protect the Natives from having to sell at a price which would probably be much below that which the Board would have assessed as the value of the land. And I think, Sir, it will be admitted that that provision is a safeguard to the Natives. Now, let us compare the position of the Natives under the existing law with their position as proposed under this Bill. Under the existing law, the Government can, by placing a Proclamation over any land, prevent any one from attempting to purchase or deal with it without subjecting himself to severe penalties; and so long as the Proclamation was kept over it, all the Natives could do—and in many cases I am informed, Sir, they have been forced by their necessities to do it—was to go to the Native-land Purchaser, and by him their land is bought. They offer to sell, and their land is bought at a price below its real value. Compare that, I say, with the provisions of this Bill. The first thing we do is to assess the value of the land, and then we say to the Natives, “Do you elect to sell this land, or will you allow us to take the land under the provisions of the Land Act?” And then, so that their necessities shall not press too hardly upon them, seeing that we have put the Proclamation probably over a large area of land, we say the State is empowered as agent to lease or sell, and power is taken here to make advances to the owners of the land to meet their pressing needs. All we charge for that advance is 4 per cent.; and any advance so made will be made a charge upon the land itself, so that when the owners let or sell the Government will be recompensed for what is advanced. Now, in dealing with the land it will probably be found that it requires roading, and there is no doubt that that is a drawback so far as the Natives are concerned, and I know that in some parts of the colony there are many Natives living together, who have far more land than they can cultivate. They are forced to live on it,

but they have not the means, though they hold thousands of acres of land in other parts, to go upon the lands at all. They cannot sell them; they have not the means to bring the land into use, and they are living in an impoverished state. Provision is made for their case. Once they have met together and elected either to sell or lease, then the Government commences to make roads through the land and to survey it, and to provide other conveniences such as Europeans require for getting upon their lands. They reserve to the Natives certain portions of the land; and one portion will be sold or leased, which will bring them in the means of living, and provide them with the means of cultivating and settling down on the remaining portion of the land. I say that at the present time they are entirely blocked out. The provisions of this Bill will give them the opportunity of settling on their own lands, and will remove the disabilities under which they labour at the present time. Now, my colleague put it, I think, very fairly to the Native members, and not in any way with the intention to threaten or coerce the Natives, or to force this legislation upon them. He told them that the time was now fast arriving when the Europeans, in view of the way in which settlement is retarded in the North Island, will insist on the present state of affairs coming to an end. There is no one who has travelled over any district in the North Island, and who has spoken to those who are taking, and do take, a kindly interest in the Native race—but has been told by these people that it is impossible to carry on with the present state of things, and that, in fact, the whole of these Native districts are being kept back. Then, there are no means of communication, and wherever these Native lands are looked up there is no European settlement, and the local bodies cannot find the means for making roads. These tracts of Native land the Government cannot, or do not, or will not find money for; and the result is that the settlement of the North Island is retarded owing to the vast tracts of Native lands which are at the present time looked up, and which block the progress of settlement. In the Bill before us we are asking the Natives to voluntarily sell to us, giving them a reasonable time—letting them well understand there is no advantage, as I say, in postponing the bringing into force of this Act. The sooner this Act is brought into force, with the liberty that is given to them under the law—the sooner this opportunity is given to the Native race to have their land valued and to sell to the Government voluntarily, the better it will be for them. The Government has no wish whatever to do anything hastily. The issue of the Proclamations may be kept back. The Government will only take small areas, to see what the Natives will do to meet the Government in this respect. We are not bound to take the whole of the land. It is entirely a matter for the Government. We may try this in certain districts, where settlement is retarded; and I say, if the Government, with the powers conferred on them by

this Bill, find any particular district where settlement is now being retarded, and where the Natives are desirous of disposing of their land at a fair value, then we shall put the Act in force, issue a Proclamation, and get the land valued. And if the Natives then found that they were getting a fair value from the Government for the land, safeguarded as it would be, this method of disposing of their lands would become popular, and we could extend the Proclamations, and we should have the Natives in all parts coming to us and offering to sell their lands under the terms and conditions proposed by this Bill. In support of the contention of the Government as to the time having arrived now when something must be done to meet the demands for settlement in the North Island, let me tell them there is the construction of the Main Trunk Railway to be provided for, and the construction of the main arterial roads in the North Island. We have to look to the condition of affairs in connection with the work of the Government Land Purchase Commissioners; and the condition of the roads north of Auckland, where you have tracts of Native land which will maintain a large European population, and which, if disposed of either by sale or by lease, would place the Natives in that position which they, as landowners in this colony, have a right to be placed in. I say it would be only wise in their own interest if they met the Government and accepted the provisions of this measure and gave it a fair trial. They would find that there is no wish to do them an injustice—no wish to take from them in any way what they possess; but we do say the time has arrived now when settlement can no longer be retarded in the North Island. This brings me to that section of the Act mentioned by the honourable member for Eden—the section providing that a decision of the majority of Native owners of a piece of land to sell or lease should bind the minority. Well, I do not know whether it might not be said that perhaps a three-fifths majority might force the others to agree. At any rate, whether or not a simple majority should be considered sufficient, that is a question to be settled in Committee, and one which the Government would be prepared to meet fairly. But it would be a great pity, I think, where a large body of the Native owners desired to hand over their land to the Government for leasing under the Land Act, or to sell to the Government at the fair value assessed by the Board, to say that the minority of the owners should say, "We won't allow you to sell or to lease that block," particularly where it would be impossible for the Government to deal with that block of land unless they got the block as a whole. That is the difficulty we had to meet, and that is why this particular provision has been placed in the Bill. Sir, the honourable member for Hawke's Bay is consistent. He has always contended there should be free-trade in Native land. Well, Sir, I must say that the Government does not see its way clear to admit that. We say that it would be injurious to the Native race, and injurious to

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the country. And, at the same time, we say that, the State holding that view, or the Government holding that view, we have no right to deny to the Natives the privilege that we give to the Europeans, and that is, that they shall obtain a fair value for their land. That is the main principle of this Bill. The machinery and the whole spirit of the measure now before the House have all been framed for that purpose. We hope to see it accepted. I will ask that, the principle being agreed upon, we should refer the Bill—not to take up too much time, although, of course, it is a Bill dealing with a large subject—to the Native Affairs Committee. We have on that Committee those who will, I feel assured, do what is right to the Natives, and at the same time will act fairly towards the Europeans. I think that the explanation of this Bill was well given by my colleague: in fact, there is no necessity whatever to repeat to the House the speech he delivered, for the details he has given of the measure were such as every one should well understand. I should like to see all party feeling set aside when dealing with a measure of this kind. I should like to see party feeling kept clear altogether from Bills dealing with this very important subject. Let both sides of the House go together. Let us endeavour to produce a good Bill—a Bill which will do justice to the Natives, and at the same time promote the settlement of the North Island, and not keep things in the unsatisfactory state they are now in. That is the wish of the Government in introducing this measure, and I am pleased that so far it has been so well received.

Mr. KAPA.—I feel compelled to speak on this Bill, because my mind is full of apprehension, notwithstanding the very satisfactory explanation made by the Minister. Honourable members will have observed that a great number of petitions have already been received from Natives protesting against this measure. They have come principally from the Wanganui district. Notwithstanding the statement of Ministers that no harm can come to the Maoris if this Bill becomes law, I cannot accept that, because my eyes do not deceive me when I look at the contents of the Bill. The Premier has stated that not one acre can be taken from the Natives compulsorily under this measure; other well-informed gentlemen inform us that it simply means confiscation. Now, which of these two statements can we place dependence upon? Although the Natives have never ceased to sell land to the Government, and though they sell large quantities year by year, yet this Bill is introduced, and is entitled a Bill to purchase Native land. And it should also be remembered that, in a great many of the land-purchases of the Government in the past, gross acts of injustice have been done to the Natives. The House has not forgotten, and will not forget, a most shameful transaction that occurred last year—I allude to the London purchase; and the matter has come before the House again quite recently. What guarantees have we that such abuses will not occur in the future? Are these Commissioners

who are to be appointed under this measure to be above suspicion? I should like to ask the Government what steps they intend to take with regard to the petition of Major Kemp and other Native chiefs, who have asked for some local self-government. It seems that the foundation of their request is taken away by this measure. The Natives ask that certain rights which were guaranteed to them under the 71st clause of the New Zealand Constitution Act should be maintained to them. If the Government tell us that those provisions have no legal effect at present, then, of course, I must accept that as true. It seems a strange coincidence that at this time, when the Natives are asking for some local self-government, the Government should be bringing in a drastic measure of this sort. I think it is a great pity that the reasonable request that the Natives are now making, and which they are perfectly justified in making, is not granted. A number of Natives are waiting patiently in Wellington in the hope of receiving some reply from the Government to petitions that they have presented, and the only answer they seem likely to get is the introduction of Bills by the Government dealing with their land. The Minister of Lands, in introducing this Bill, has stated that the Natives constantly ask for delay. I consider that they are entitled to ask for delay. Their land is a matter of great importance to them, and they should have every opportunity of considering what is best to be done under the circumstances. Another reason why the Natives ask for delay is that they are disgusted with the nature of the legislation which has been introduced by Governments in former times; they have no confidence in it, and therefore they are quite right in asking for delay. I think, if such a measure as this were proposed to be brought into operation over European lands, every man would seize his rifle, and blood would be shed. The House will remember the Biblical story of King Ahab demanding the vineyard from Naboth: on his refusing to give it the king threatened to put him to death. It seems to me that story is illustrated by the policy of the Government regarding Native lands at the present time. Last year we passed the Native Land Purchases Act, and clause 15 of that Act provides that before the share of any minor can pass to the Crown a Judge of the Supreme Court has to give his consent. Now, that clause, which afforded some protection to the Natives, is proposed to be repealed by this measure. Under the law now in force the Government have power to proclaim Native land for two years only as being under negotiation, but under this Act it can be proclaimed to all eternity. Under this Bill it is proposed to reserve to the Natives not less than twenty-five acres of first-class land for each person; but should it happen that a man has a large number of children born to him, how can they all be maintained on such a small area as that? The Maoris are not in a too prosperous condition at the present time, notwithstanding the large quantity of land that

they own, and I attribute their poverty to the obnoxious laws which this Parliament has passed. Now, the Minister, in introducing this measure, stated that it emanated from the Native member of the Executive; and I assume that is true, because both the Ministers have left the chamber. I know of cases where the Government, as far back as 1874, proclaimed certain land as being under negotiation, and these lands have not been purchased by the Government up to the present time. Now, if I were to follow out my own wishes I should speak at very great length in opposition to this measure; but I do not wish to weary honourable members, and I know there are many honourable gentlemen who wish to speak on the question. I am not enamoured of the proposition to refer this Bill to the Native Affairs Committee, because I believe when it does get there I shall still feel bound to oppose it.

Sir R. STOUT.—I wish to say one or two words about this Bill, but I do not intend to debate its provisions, because I am on the Native Affairs Committee, and this Bill, I understand, is to be referred to that Committee. I wish, however, to say one or two words as to how I think the House should approach Bills dealing with Native lands. I think the House should not forget that land, to the Maori, is everything. His civilisation is quite distinct from ours. He has not our pecuniary wealth in other directions. To him the land is the only wealth. It is not only his only heritage, but all his associations are linked with it; and therefore we, in dealing with the Maori race, should deal more leniently with them than we would deal with the land of Europeans, and, if we have to pass a Bill in order to provide for the settlement of Native lands, that Bill should not be so drastic as would be a measure for the settlement of European lands. I submit, Sir, that we should start with that; and we should also remember this: that the Maoris are really a race subject to us. We are far more numerous than the Maoris, and they cannot compete with us in any walk of life; and in dealing with these Maori lands and the Maori race we should respect what we may call their prejudices, because that really means respecting their past history and their present life. Any one, I think, who heard the introduction of the Minister of Lands must have been struck by the fairness and by the ability with which he placed this Bill before us. I am not going to criticize his speech, but I wish to say this: that if it is imagined this Bill is going to settle the Native question we shall all live to be grievously disappointed. This Bill does not touch even the fringe of the question. There are various things in connection with the question of dealing with Native lands which this Bill does not touch, and which no one Bill can touch. We are dealing with a race that is not increasing in numbers, and that cannot possibly equal us in civilisation for perhaps centuries to come; and we must never forget that. What does this Bill propose to do? We are told by the Premier that this is a new departure in legislation dealing with

the Maoris. I shall show before I sit down that the only good thing in this Bill is copied from the Native Land Administration Act of 1886; and wherever this Bill departs from that Act of 1886 I submit it is not fair to the Maori people. And let me say it is a wholly wrong thing to assume that land cannot be purchased from the Maori people. The Maoris are only too anxious to sell their land. The only thing that has stopped the acquisition of land in New Zealand has been the want of money. We could have obtained hundreds of thousands of acres of lands from the Maoris if the Governments in the past, and the present Government, had had the money to go into the market and buy land from the Maoris, and pay them a fair price for it. So far, therefore, as any statement is concerned that it is necessary to give the Government power to compel the Maoris to sell, I altogether deny that. The Maoris are only too willing to sell their lands. Now, what does this Bill propose? I shall state its provisions in a very few words, so that those honourable members who, perhaps, have not paid attention to the Bill may clearly understand it. The Bill proposes to do this: It proposes to issue Proclamations over parts of the North Island in which there are Native lands. These are proclaimed areas. Once that area is proclaimed Government can send a Board to ascertain the actual value of that land. Once the land-value has been ascertained by the Board, then the Government has the right to go to the Maoris and say, "You must elect either to sell this land to the Crown, or, if you choose, you can elect to dispose of it under the Land Act of 1892." That means, practically, leasing it, if it is pastoral land, and, if it is not pastoral land, then leasing it on what is termed the eternal lease, or selling it. These are exactly the two things put to the Maoris. If the Maoris do not care to sell the land or lease the land, then the land is, like Mahomet's coffin, hung up, and the Maoris can do nothing with it. That is not put clearly in the Bill, but that is the meaning of it. If honourable members will refer to the 16th section of the Native Land Purchases Act of 1892 they will see there is, as the honourable member for the Northern Maori District pointed out, this distinction between that Act and this Bill: that in that Act of 1892 the Proclamation was only valid for two years; but now the Proclamation becomes, like this eternal lease, eternally valid, unless the Government like to withdraw it. Those are the provisions of the Bill, shortly stated,—only that the Government are not bound to give the Maoris cash, but can issue debentures, on which they pay $8\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. So that if the Maoris do not choose to sell the land at the price fixed upon it, and do not choose to lease it under the Land Act, then they can do nothing with their land whatever. Those are the chief provisions of the Bill. There is this other provision: that in the land not within the proclaimed areas—that is, all Maori land—the Government has the right of what is called pre-emption: that is, the Maoris cannot sell

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the land without first offering it to the Government. Those are, practically, the whole of the provisions of the Bill. There are, of course, subsidiary provisions, such as this: that the majority of the owners in number if their interests are not ascertained, or one-half in value if their interests have been ascertained, can compel the other half to sell the land to the Government. That is the other provision of the Bill. There is no provision for partition. It has been said this is a new departure. In some respects it is not; in some respects it is. But in the Native Land Administration Act of 1886 what was the provision? The provision was this: If the Maoris wished to sell the land they were bound to go to the Government, and to sell it under the Land Act of 1885. Then the land was to be sold by auction. The Maoris could then get the best price, and were not bound to put their land under this stupid tenure of the eternal lease. That would have been far fairer to them. The Act of 1886 was far fairer in another direction, because it said, if the owners could not agree, there was to be partition, and the owners who did not choose to sell had their land separated from that possessed by those who desired to sell. Another provision was made also that where there were a large number of owners in one title they could elect a committee, and that committee could act for the owners and authorise the disposal of the land, and then the money would be carefully looked after, and the rents or other moneys distributed to them through the Audit Office, to see that they got their money. I submit that the Act of 1886 was fairer than this Act, and would have been more workable. It would not have been so drastic as many of the provisions in this Bill, and it provided for settlement in a better way than this Bill provides for it. In saying that this is a new departure the Premier must have been entirely forgetful of our proposal in the Act of 1886. So far as the Act of 1886 was concerned, of course it was repealed shortly afterwards, but up to 1888 the Natives did not come under it: and I doubt very much if for two years the Natives will come under this Bill. As far as that is concerned, there is nothing to compel them to come in; they may do what the honourable member for the Northern Maori District said they have a right to do—they may say, "*Taihoa*; we will delay, and delay, and delay," and they may hang the thing up, and there is no power to compel them to do otherwise. So this Bill is not a settlement of the Native-lands question, nor do I think it can be expected that any Government will bring in a Bill that will lead to a settlement of the question. We must deal tentatively with it, we must deal experimentally with it, and we must deal with the Natives, knowing their prejudices, as we would with people whom we wish to win over, and not to force. There are some provisions of the Bill which, I think, will be altered, and I only wish to mention one that has been referred to by the honourable member for the Northern Maori District. What is the meaning of section 15? What does it

provide? You are to consider the land that the Maori has for disposal; and what are you to consider sufficient land? You are to consider, if a Maori gets 25 acres of first-class land, 50 acres of second-class land, and 100 acres of pastoral land, that is sufficient for a Maori. Are we willing to apply that to Europeans? Would we go, for instance, to the districts of Oamaru and Timaru, or other parts, and are we prepared to say to the owners of the large estates there, "You shall not sell and you shall not lease a single acre, unless you do so through our eternal lease; and, if you say you are entitled to have some land for yourself, the only area you shall be entitled to shall be 25 acres of first-class land, 50 acres of second-class land, and 100 acres of pastoral land"? Were such a Bill proposed in this House by any Government it would be at once declared they were that class of people for whom trustees are appointed in this Bill—called lunatics. The honourable member for the Northern Maori District is quite right in objecting to that provision. This is surely insufficient for the Maoris, who are beginning themselves to be sheep-farmers. I know a number of Maoris who have thousands of sheep; and would you say to them, "We will take all your land from you, and leave you each a hundred acres of pastoral land, and that will be sufficient to maintain you"? That provision will have to be changed. This Bill, I submit, therefore, will have to be altered. I do not object to the provision that the Natives should be compelled, if they wish to sell or lease their land, to do so through Government officers. But I submit that the Natives ought not, under this or any Bill, to be forced to take up this stupid eternal lease; and they should be allowed, if they desire it, to lease their lands in a manner similar to that in which the West Coast Settlement Reserves are being leased; and we should give them the right of purchase also. If they choose to lease their land let it be done by auction, let it be open to all, let every one have an equal right to compete. But we have no right to force the Natives to come under our own Land Act. We should give them the same right as the Public Trustee has under the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, and also under another Bill which has yet to be considered—namely, the Native Reserves Bill—and then, I submit, it will be fair. If you do that I believe they will come to see—once they get their lands leased—that their land has not wholly departed from them; that it may come back, as their young people desire to become farmers themselves; and you would thus provide some chance of the race rising. But you will afford no chance of the race rising if you take the whole of their land from them and leave them with 25 acres of first-class land, 50 acres of second-class land, and 100 acres of pastoral land. What must you look forward to the Maoris becoming? You must look to their becoming farmers. You cannot expect them to be able—although they may in some cases—to become manufacturers, or to take up what may be termed the higher walks of civilisation. There

have been, and will be, some mechanics, and some who can emulate our race in other walks, but you must expect them to be what they were in the past—a pastoral people. They are not expected to be equal to us in the higher walks of civilisation, and therefore you must allow them to keep even larger quantities of land than Europeans; and it is therefore absurd to limit them to these small areas. What, I submit, you have to do in dealing with Native lands is this: You have a right to say that if their lands are to be sold or disposed of they must go through a certain procedure, and are not to be disposed of as in the past. I think that is right. As to the purchase of Maori land, I again repeat, there is no difficulty in getting lands provided you have enough money to pay. I undertake to say, if you placed half a million at the disposal of the Native Land Office, you could buy half a million's worth of land to-morrow, if it were sold at such a value as is proposed in this Bill. It is not the want of land, but the want of money to spend in purchasing it, that has interfered with the purchase of land in the past. I shall not deal with the other details of the Bill, because I am on the Native Affairs Committee, and have noted on my copy a great number of alterations—I do not mean to say they touch the main part of the Bill; and I shall, no doubt, have an opportunity on the Committee of dealing with them.

Mr. RICHARDSON.—Sir, I have a few words to say on the second reading of this Bill. There is no use opposing the second reading, as it will, no doubt, go to the Native Affairs Committee. But I do think one is justified in entering a protest against the course which is being pursued by the Government to an extent I have never known before in this House—that is, the course of legislation by Committees. We have Bills put before us without proper consideration; we have them sent to a Committee, and they come back from the Committee with the title, and perhaps the title only, unamended. We have been dealing with a very important Bill on the Native Affairs Committee for days and days, with the result that we are making something of a Bill which was simply unworkable as it came to us; and it is now very difficult to say how much is Bill and how much is amendment, and I believe there is quite as much amendment as Bill, if not more. Now we have this Bill to be read a second time, and to go to the Native Affairs Committee—a Bill which has not been carefully considered by the Government, for if it had been drafted by the Native member of the Executive I do not think it would have been in this form; and I think I must have misunderstood the Minister of Lands, who introduced it, when he attributed the authorship of the Bill to that honourable gentleman. In moving the second reading of the Bill the Minister of Lands said he had no desire to do the Natives an injustice—that if the Natives handed their land to the Government under the Land Act they would have an assured income. If it is

handed over under the Land Act it will be leased for 999 years, at 4 per cent. There is a provision in this Bill that if it is handed over the Government shall take from the block sufficient land to pay for the expense of the survey and of roading. That in itself, as compared with the value of ordinary land, will be a very large proportion of the whole, and will be simply confiscated, while the remainder, of which the Natives will receive the rents, will bring in some nominal amount, which will in no sense represent an income of value, or anything like a value representative of the lands they are parting with. The honourable member for Inangahua, in speaking just now, put the case very plainly. One of the Ministers—I think it was the Premier—stated that this was on the same lines as the Land for Settlements Act of last year. All I can say is, let any Minister try to bring down a Bill to deal with European lands in the same way as this Bill, and he will very soon hear enough about it. No Minister would dare to propose such a thing. The Bill is unjust from start to finish. To start with the interpretation clause, all Native land which has, or which has not, passed through the Land Court,—land held under every description of title,—comes within the scope of this Bill. None of these lands escape from the effects of this Bill. Then, we are told that the value of the land is to be assessed by a Board. But what sort of a Board? Three Government officials and two Natives; and one of the Government officials is to have a casting-vote, so that if only two of the Government officials and the Natives are present the Natives are defeated. The Natives are only put on the Board for the sake of ornament, for there is no chance of their being any use in the matter. And, Sir, it is a most objectionable thing that Civil servants—I am not saying anything in disparagement of the Civil servants, but they are under the control of the Minister of the day—it is most unfair that men in an official position should be placed in a position where the responsibility would devolve upon them of defining the value of large areas of land, and dealing with matters of such magnitude as appear here. This function is more of a judicial character. Decisions on such large questions as this should be left to some independent officer who would not be under the control of the Ministry of the day. Then, the alternative that is given to the unfortunate Natives is this: They must either sell at the price fixed by this official Board, or else consent to their land being leased for 999 years at 4 per cent. That is the alternative. Can the members of the Government say that this is a fair principle? To make it fair, you want to have a third alternative, to this effect: "or to dispose of such land by sale or lease to any person whomsoever, at a price not being less than that fixed by the Board." Are the Natives to be forced to accept 5s. from the Government when I can give 7s. 6d. for their land? Is that fair? Why should we interfere with their lands in a way that nobody would dare to interfere with European lands? Then, with regard

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to being on the same footing with our Land for Settlements Act of last year, "election" in this Bill means a form which may be signed by one or more people, Native owners, agreeing to one of the two courses set forth. A canvasser for the sale—I think that term fits the occasion—gets a signature of one of the owners here, and another signature yonder. To take a parallel case among Europeans, he goes to farmer No. 1, who agrees to this, and to farmers Nos. 3 and 5: we will suppose them to be in a district of South Canterbury. He succeeds in getting half the owners to agree to sell to the Government at a fixed price, and, if the policy of the Bill is applied to the case, then the Government can compel every other one of these farmers, or the owners and occupiers of the land in that district, whether they are willing to do so or not, to take the Government price, and the Government can remove them from their lands. The Bill is really, in its present form, too absurd, regarded from a European standpoint, to be worthy of criticism. If honourable members turn to the end of clause 9, on the top of page 6, they will find,—

"Trustees for infants, lunatics, or others under any disability may, on behalf of such persons, and notwithstanding the terms of the trust, make such election, and any election so made shall be binding on such persons and be valid as if expressly authorised by the trust."

Then, a little lower down,—

"The Order in Council may be registered under 'The Deeds Registration Act, 1868,' in the Deeds Registration Office for the district within which the land is situated, if the land is subject to that Act, and, if not, then the Order in Council may be registered under 'The Land Transfer Act, 1885,' as if the same was a valid transfer to Her Majesty, and the District Land Registrar shall cancel all entries on the register affecting or relating to the title to such land."

Further down, in clause 11, if the election comes under the Land Act:—

"Such Order in Council shall vest the land in Her Majesty, subject to the trust aforesaid, but freed and discharged from all estates, claims, charges, rights, and interests therein."

If the Natives elect under this law to bring their land under the Land Act, and lease it in this manner, those Europeans who have valid leases for long terms will be forced to give up those leases, or, rather, those leases are absolutely cancelled. That is what the Bill proposes. No doubt, provision is made later on in the Bill that some consideration shall be paid for this; but I say that if a man has a valid and proper lease, putting him in occupation of the land for a definite period, the Government have no right whatever, without his consent, to interfere with his rights, and compulsorily to turn him off his land. It has been suggested to me that there can be no valid lease of proclaimed land. There can be no valid lease after land is proclaimed; but the Government here take power to proclaim land anywhere covering ground which is now held under lease: at least, that is

how I read the Bill. Now, I think the most inequitable portion of the whole Bill is to be found in the latter portion of clause 12, which says, "and such instrument so executed shall bind all the owners of such land, and all other persons whomsoever, whether infants, lunatics, or other persons under any disability, and whether assenting to or dissenting from such conveyance or surrender." There is one thing the Minister may make himself perfectly satisfied about—that, unless this Bill is so amended by the Native Affairs Committee as to be perfectly unrecognisable by the honourable gentleman, it will never pass through this House this session, or any other session.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I should have expected from the honourable gentleman who has just sat down that he would view this Bill in some spirit of fairness. On the present occasion he seems to have considered it his duty to find nothing but fault in this Bill. He commenced by objecting to the Government surveying or roading Native lands, and he told the House that it would be a great injustice to the Natives, and that very little would be left to them if this were done. I need only point out to him that the Government are going to do exactly the same with the Cheviot Estate. They are going to survey and road that estate and then charge the cost of that to those who purchase the land. And why should they not do the same to the Natives? In this case they are treating the Natives as they are now proposing to treat persons who are about to settle on the Cheviot Estate. There is no injustice whatever, and no difference between the treatment of the Natives and the treatment of the Europeans. He went on to say that the whole Bill is unjust from beginning to end. I see nothing whatever unjust in it. I may be mistaken, but I take a very different view from his. Then he went on to object to the Board. There I am inclined to agree with him to some extent. I think there are certain Civil servants who are being placed on too many Boards. I think it would be better if some of those Civil servants were not upon as many Boards as they are. I believe it would be much better if persons outside the immediate control of the Government were appointed to such Boards as these. At the same time, I believe that at least some of these gentlemen should be on the Board, such as the Surveyor-General. Of course this is merely a Committee objection. And, so far as the Bill goes, it provides that the Board shall appoint competent valuers, so that the Board itself does not value the land. It employs valuers, and the Board must take all the necessary precautions to see that the valuers fix a fair and reasonable price on the land. So far as the objection of the honourable gentleman to the Board goes, it has not very much weight. Now, in reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, he should be an authority on subjects of this kind. He commences by using a term which is often used in the House. He says we should "trust the people." That has been a very common term in the House during the

past week. What did the honourable gentleman mean in this case? I presume he meant that we should trust the Natives in the hands of the land-speculators and sharpers, so that they might rob them just as they have been doing during the last thirty years. He went on to say that experience should show us that they were not plundered of their lands; but I say that when the Natives dealt with the land-speculators very little of the money paid for their lands ever reached their pockets. Then he went on to say that he would treat the Natives as ourselves. Very well; that is just what this Bill proposes to do. This is not a Bill introduced to sell land in any sense, so far as I can read it. It is only fair and reasonable that if the Natives decline to part with their lands, or to sell them to the Government or to any one else, they should be treated exactly as ourselves and be under the same laws. That is, I presume, what it is going to lead up to, because the Natives must make this decision: They must either be prepared to use their lands and be taxed on their lands the same as Europeans, or be prepared to sell them or dispose of them in some other way. That, I believe, the Natives are beginning to realise, and I have heard the Native members say time after time in this House that they were prepared to do so as soon as the restrictions were taken off the lands; and I presume that, as soon as this law is brought into force, in any case where the Natives decline to sell the restrictions will be removed, and they will be subjected to the same local taxation as are Europeans. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to advocate a most extraordinary system of dealing with Native lands. I was astonished when I heard the honourable gentleman's remarks. He said he would employ a number of Native Land Court Judges. He would begin what might be called a working-backward system: he would place these men out in the country, where they would deal with the lands in a small circle round them; they would commence to work a backward system. It would take a thousand years to settle these lands in that way. I was astonished at the honourable gentleman's remarks. I suppose he had to say something as far as he could to find fault with the Bill, and, as he could see nothing very objectionable in it, he must necessarily ridicule it in some way or another. The honourable member for Eden seemed to attach considerable importance to what he termed "the threats of the Minister in reference to the Natives." Now, Sir, I listened very carefully to what the Minister said when introducing the Bill, and I failed to hear one word which might in any way be termed a threat. He merely pointed out to the Natives the position, calling their attention to the responsibilities that attached to their ownership of land, and telling them that they must face the inevitable—that they must face the responsibilities attaching to the ownership of land, either by cultivating it or by using it in such a way as not to retard settlement. In dealing with a Bill like this I am sorry to say I am afraid it is

going to be treated in a similar manner to other Bills introduced in this House: that is, it will be treated from a party point of view, and the honourable gentlemen sitting on the Opposition benches will fail to discover anything good in it, and they will do all they can to turn it to ridicule, and prejudice the minds of the Natives against it. I have seen that over and over again during the last six years in this House. No matter what Bill is brought in by the Government occupying these benches, the Opposition always consider it their duty to abuse that Bill. I should be sorry if anything of that kind should happen to this Bill. I do not think the passing of such a Bill—if it is possible to pass such a Bill—will enable Natives to deal directly with their lands, but it will save them from plunderers and speculators, and it will do more to settle the North Island than all the Bills we have been tinkering with here. I say such a Bill will do more to give employment to workmen in this Island in clearing bush-lands; it will promote the settlement of the country, and by these means bring about such a state of prosperity as we have not yet had in this Island. I hope, for the sake of the colony, that every member in this House will do his best to improve this Bill where it requires improving, and put it into the best possible shape, so that justice may be done both to the Natives and to the colony. The Bill, so far as I can see, is one altogether beyond party politics, and it should not be approached from a party point of view. Every one who occupies a seat in this House should be deeply interested in the passing of such a Bill as this, and I should be very sorry to see any attempt to postpone its passing. The condition of the Natives throughout this North Island, as is well known by those who have lived among them, is something to be deeply regretted. In many districts the Natives are possessed of large areas of first-class country, from which they derive no income whatever. They do not cultivate the land, which is mostly covered with bush. It is lying waste, and the Natives are in such a condition of mind that they are afraid to deal with any one in land. They have a suspicion of every one who approaches them in reference to their lands, owing to many transactions that have taken place, and which were not such as they ought to have been. They look upon every person who approaches them as a person who wishes to take advantage of them. If a Bill such as this were passed, it would do away with that class of speculators, and would tend to bring the Natives and the Government together in such a way that it would in a short time settle the Natives' minds, and they would find it was to their advantage to bring large areas of their lands under the operation of this Bill. Of course it is not intended to in any way interfere with Native lands that are occupied, but only with the waste lands which are of no use to the Natives. So far as I read this Bill, it is optional; there is nothing compulsory in the measure, so far as I can see, from one end of it to the other. The Natives have the option of deciding by election

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whether they will sell or not. The question of introducing the three-fifths into the Bill is merely a Committee question. This is really a protective measure. If this Bill is passed through the House with several amendments that are necessary, I believe it will really protect the Natives, and prevent them from being treated as they are treated at the present time. The honourable member for Inangahua alluded to the smallness of the area of land which it was proposed to retain to the Natives. Well, of course that is the minimum.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is deemed to be a sufficient maximum.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I do not consider that it is sufficient. I think the greatest care should be taken to see that the Natives retain in their hands ample lands for their own use. There should be no attempt to take land from the Natives where there is any possibility of its being required for their own use. They should be allowed to retain it; and, in fact, if the Natives would cultivate their lands the same as Europeans, I would not interfere with them at all. If the Natives would do that, and would place sheep upon the large areas of land they possess, I should be inclined to place them on the same footing as the Europeans. It is only where the land is lying unoccupied that this Bill should have application. I look upon the Bill entirely as a machinery Bill. In my opinion, if the Bill were put on the statute-book even in its present shape, it could do no harm to the Natives, and, unless they choose to agree to sell their land to the Government, they should not be compelled to sell. The matter rests entirely in their hands. If the Natives, in making their election, decide to sell their land, I do not see why they should not be allowed to sell it, and I think a provision should be put into the Bill to this effect. The proposal to invest half of the money for their benefit with the Public Trustee is, I think, a very wise one. The greatest fault in our legislation hitherto has been that the money has been paid direct to the Natives themselves, and it has very soon disappeared, and has done them very little good. Provision is made in the Bill for the Native Land Court to define the ownership of the land. Every protection is given them so that no injustice shall be done where land is taken under this Bill. I do not object to the Natives leasing their land. My impression is that in most cases it would be really better if the Natives were to lease instead of selling. They would then have a perpetual income. With regard to the question of charging the expenses of opening up these lands on the land, I do not agree at all with the view taken that these lands are not fit for settlement, but without roads it is impossible to dispose of them. I think it is only fair and reasonable that the money spent in opening up Native lands for settlement should be charged against those lands. If that were done as proposed the Natives would be no losers in any way. The provision that half the purchase-money may be paid in, so that there cannot be default, is a very wise one.

Then I come to the point where the Natives refuse to sell their lands. I presume that if they do so they should be placed in exactly the same position as the European landlord: that is, if they refuse to deal with the Government and to sell their lands, all restrictions should be removed from the land, and the Native owners should be placed on the same footing as the Europeans—they should have the right to sell and dispose of their lands as they choose.

An Hon. MEMBER.—That is not in the Bill.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I say it should be in the Bill. It can be put in. If you remove all restrictions from those blocks of land the Natives will get a better price for them from those who purchase. The Government, I believe, will take care, in anything that is done, to see that the Natives are treated fairly. I would be the last to advocate anything that would inflict an injustice on the Natives. I say distinctly we must not attempt to force the Native to sell his land, or to tax his land, unless we are prepared to remove restrictions from that land, and to place him on the same footing as the European. If we do that, the objections the Native has to sell his land will very soon disappear, and the Natives will in a short time find it will be in their interests to come forward and offer their lands to the Government. The great difficulty the Government have to face is to remove the fears from the minds of the Natives. They are suspicious of every Government, and of every party, and of every white man. They have been so abused that I feel that the first duty of the Government will be to so act as to remove this suspicion from the minds of the Natives, and to induce them to act in their own interest; and to take every precaution to see that any money they agree to pay the Natives shall be actually paid them, or that it shall be invested for the benefit of themselves and their children, and also that all land-purchase transactions shall cease. As soon as the Government do that, and convince the Natives that they are going to deal fairly and justly by them, I believe the strength of mind and common-sense and shrewdness which we all know the Natives are possessed of will, in a short time, lead them to accept this measure, and to approach the Government and place any lands they do not require at the disposal of the Government. I tell the Natives plainly they must be prepared to be treated the same as the Europeans. The Natives should be placed on the same footing as the Europeans. They should be freed of all disabilities, and placed in the position to do what they please with their land. I believe it would be to their interest to deal with the Government, and I think they would feel satisfied that the Government would see to their interests.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—As this Bill is going before the Native Affairs Committee, I do not propose to make any lengthy remarks upon it at this stage; but I think it is my duty, in the interests of the district I represent, to say a few words before the second reading is passed. And here let me say I have no desire at all to say

one word of a party character. I think this Bill should be dealt with free of all such feeling, and solely on its merits. The honourable gentleman who has just sat down has made one or two remarks applying more to his own district than to the other districts of the North Island. These remarks referred to the attitude of the Natives to the Europeans residing amongst them. I am very glad to say that my experience in the district I represent has been of an opposite character. The impression the honourable gentleman gave to the House was that the Natives are very suspicious of the Europeans amongst whom they live.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—Sir, I ask to be allowed to make a personal explanation. I made no reference whatever to the Europeans amongst whom the Natives resided. I only referred to land-speculators, and to those who approached the Natives with the view of buying their land.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I am very glad indeed to hear that I misunderstood the honourable gentleman's remarks, because I think it is very unfortunate, at this stage of the colony's history, that Europeans settled and living among the Natives should be regarded in that light.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—The honourable gentleman misunderstood my remarks.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—At all events, I do not think I misunderstood the honourable gentleman when he referred to the Natives as being suspicious of the Government; and this Bill must necessarily increase that suspicion rather than decrease it. I have made the necessary inquiries since the Hon. the Minister of Lands proposed the second reading of the Bill, and I have ascertained that the measure was not interpreted until about the beginning of this month; and I am given to understand that the Government have taken no steps whatever to make its contents known amongst the large number of Natives in the North Island whom this Bill will very deeply affect. Now, I entirely agree with the remark made by the honourable member for Inangahua, that this House should give this subject more careful consideration than it is likely to receive, for the reason mentioned by the honourable member. That reason was, that the land of a Native means so much more to him than it does to the European. And I would ask the Minister of Lands—not from any Opposition point of view, but from a fair and just point of view—does he think it right that, in such an important matter as this, the Natives throughout the North Island should practically be without any knowledge whatever of a Bill which will so deeply affect them as this measure will?

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—We have proof that the Natives have a knowledge of it by the number of petitions received.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—“By the number of petitions!” These petitions possibly mean that a garbled account of the Bill has reached them, possibly from interested points of view, as to what its probable effect would be. I understand that, to a large extent, they really do not know the contents of the Bill. I am, however, quite

content that it should go before the Native Affairs Committee, to be dealt with there by honourable gentlemen who have special knowledge on the subject. I say again that the Government have been very unfair and impolitic with regard to this Bill in failing to prepare it at an earlier date, and to circulate it among the whole of the Natives of the North Island, so that they should thoroughly understand it. Coming back to the Bill, the Government estimate, I understand, is that they cannot afford to pay more to the Natives than about one-third of the price they expect to receive for it when surveyed and put upon the market.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—And roaded.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—No; I did not understand that. And this is the general estimate of the department; and, taking the Commission which is proposed to be set up in the Bill for the purchase of these lands, I think when a settlement is arrived at the Natives will not have very much for themselves out of the whole transaction. However, that is a matter which will be decided in time after the Bill becomes law. I agree also with the honourable member for Inangahua as to the inadequacy of the reserves it is proposed to make. There are a number of Natives in my district who, as years have run on, have assimilated themselves in their habits to the Europeans among whom they live, and it would be nonsense to think of restricting men like these to such a small acreage as this. In many cases they are making good use of the land they occupy, and I am sure the Native members will not allow this clause to pass in its present form. And I would also say that the Minister of Lands was wanting in consideration for the Natives when he used such strong language in proposing the second reading of the Bill. To such an extent did he do this that the Premier found it absolutely necessary to get up, very shortly after the honourable gentleman sat down, and do his best to explain away the unfavourable impression which the honourable gentleman had created.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I did not threaten them.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—The honourable gentleman may not have meant to do so—I do not say he did—but I am sure that the House felt he was putting before the Natives the absolute alternative of being forced by the strong arm of the law either to sell or lease their lands.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It was a friendly hint.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—I think the hint was that they would have to accept the alternative of being hanged or drowned.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—I want to be honest.

Mr. BUCHANAN.—Well, to be honest is a very good trait; but I should like to see the bludgeon put on one side, and the remedy applied in a less drastic form than it is applied in this Bill. Another point that I should like to touch upon is that the members of the Government, in the various speeches they made during the recess, were eloquent as to the quality of the millions of acres of land that are still in the hands of the Natives in the

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North Island. I should be very glad if I could agree with the flowery picture put before their various audiences, but I warn this House and the country generally that the quality of the land and its fitness for settlement have been greatly overestimated by the members of the Government and by the Press of the colony. I am sure that the land already in the hands of settlers, and practically settled, is by much the best-quality land we have in the North Island. These are the few remarks I think it necessary to make at the present time, and I shall probably have more to say upon the Bill when it comes back from the Native Affairs Committee.

Mr. TAIPUA.—Mr. Speaker, I have something to say on the Bill now under discussion. Now, there are certain clauses that I object to in this Bill. I object to clauses 26 and 27. I should have commenced with the beginning of the Bill and taken each clause. Now, I shall commence by saying I object to clause 2. It is quite needless for me to read each clause, for honourable members can see for themselves, and they can see that clause 2 is a very objectionable one in its character. I hope the House will follow me in the clauses that I shall state my objection to. There are a good number of clauses in the Bill that I consider objectionable. This Bill seems to me to be an entirely new departure, one quite different from anything that we have had heretofore. This is the first time that it has been proposed to take away our lands from us, and to lease them for 999 years. And I wish to express my gratitude to the Government for having proposed to lease our lands for only 999 years, when they might make it even a thousand years; and this is why I feel very grateful to those honourable gentlemen for the only concession which they have made to us. This is the first time, as far as I can remember, that such a proposal as this was ever made. There is another novel proposal in the Bill, which is to give minors seventeen years of age the right to alienate their lands. Hitherto the law has been that children must arrive at the age of twenty-one before they are fully competent to alienate their lands or to give leases of their lands, and such a proposal as this—to give power to minors to alienate their lands—in my opinion is most unjust and most unfair to the Natives. I have never before listened to such speeches as have been made by the Minister of Lands in introducing the Bill, and by the Premier. The Government seem to be actuated by the desire to get hold of everything they possibly can. They wish to prevent all other persons from getting any land at all. They seem to have a longing desire to take the lands. I have always said that the one fault of the Government system of purchasing land was that the Natives did not get a fair price for it. Hitherto the Government have taken advantage of the necessities of the Natives and got their lands from them at very insufficient prices—1s., or 5s., or 6s. an acre, sometimes. And it is because the Government have not acquired our lands in a proper manner, because they have not given us that sufficient price for

them, that I have always maintained that we should not be called upon to pay rates. The Government should remember the disabilities under which the Natives live, the restrictions placed upon them, and they should be very careful how they act, so as not to do us injustice. It is affirmed that the Natives do not contribute to the cost of government. That is quite erroneous, and I have frequently shown that it is erroneous. It is proposed to amend this Bill in the hope of making it more workable, but I cannot undertake to do that, because no answer has been made to the Natives who have recently been agitating for some system of governing themselves. Under the law at present in force relating to the purchase of Native lands, the Government can proclaim blocks for two years: under the present measure they propose to take power to proclaim our lands for all eternity. Sir, I have very little further to add to what I have already said, but I wish to urge on the Government to show the greatest consideration they possibly can to the Native people. Before I conclude I desire to express my thanks to those honourable gentlemen who have spoken on behalf of the Natives on this occasion this evening. I allude particularly to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, to the honourable member for Maitāwhiri, to the honourable member for Eden, and also to the honourable member for Inangahua; and I shall feel very much rejoiced indeed if other honourable members will deal with the Bill in the same spirit as these honourable gentlemen have done. And I am also grateful to the Government for referring such a Bill as this to the Native Affairs Committee. But in attending the Native Affairs Committee I may say I am acting contrary to the wish of the Native chiefs who are assembled in Wellington; the Native chiefs here in Wellington think it would be far better for me not to attend the Native Affairs Committee when dealing with these Native measures.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to occupy more than a few minutes, but I cannot let this Bill go to a second reading without a few observations. I shall first refer to a remark made by the honourable member for Marsden. He intimated that he thought the Opposition were given to obstructing these Native Bills, and that practically they considered it their business to prevent Native legislation. Sir, I just wish to say I know nothing whatever to justify such a statement. The fact is that the Native-land question has been one that has been dealt with by very few honourable members on either side of the House; and I think that at the present time we have got into very considerable trouble from the fact that the Government of the day have not given the opportunity to more honourable members to make themselves acquainted with what is a very intricate subject. The Native-land legislation of the past few years has been, I think, of a very opportunist character, and there are very few men who understand much about it. And that is

not only true of members of the House, but it is true generally, for there are hardly any lawyers who understand the Native-land law at the present time, and a knowledge of the question, intricate as it is, has not been facilitated by the action that has been taken in this House. Sir, I do not wish to refer to myself particularly, but for a man who has been as I have been for many years—I think for some fifteen years—upon the Native Affairs Committee, and who has some knowledge of its affairs, it is an unfortunate thing that one should not have the means of pursuing Native questions in the best manner on that Committee. I wish to say also with regard to Native affairs that we approach them under circumstances of very great difficulty. What is the position? We have no Native Minister, no one who represents either to the House or to the country any definite view upon Native matters, no one who is acquainted with the intricacies of Native affairs in the past. Sir, the position is an extremely unfortunate one. We have no Chief Judge of the Native Land Court to guide the Native Land tribunal.

An Hon. MEMBER.—He is away at present.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—He has been away for a year or a year and a half, and, apart from that, he is a man fresh in that position; and, in addition to that, there is no one now acting as Secretary of the department; and generally Native matters have been allowed to go adrift for some time back. There was something quite pathetic in what fell from the honourable member for the Northern Maori District just now. He said, "We petition the House and we bring our complaints before you, and all the reply we get is that Bill after Bill is brought down dealing with our lands and taking them from us, without any consultation with us." And I think the Natives have very considerable grounds for complaint in that they were not consulted with regard to this Bill, in view of the fact that the session has far advanced before the Bill is circulated. We are half through the session when a Bill of the most far-reaching character is brought down, and it has only been for a short time circulated among the Natives, or among Europeans who may wish to judge of its merits or to make suggestions with regard to it. I hope my honourable friend opposite will tell us whether we are to regard him as Native Minister. We have seen him acting in several capacities, and to-night it was an extremely instructive sight to see him taking up a Native Bill and dealing with it as though he were perfectly familiar with the whole subject. I think this is not a right position for the House to be in. I have a great respect for the honourable gentleman. I do not want to see him go beyond his last, like the proverbial cobbler: I want to see him stick to "Lands" while he is on those benches. Not that our own land legislation is in a very much better condition than the Native-land legislation, but, still, I think that if he sticks to European land-laws he may do very well. But I do not

think he is anything more than an apprentice, and he cannot be said to be doing more than putting a 'prentice hand to these Native affairs, and I am afraid that if another Bill is placed in his power we shall find a good deal of confusion in connection with it, and the necessity for a good deal of amendment in it in the future. The Premier also has treated us to-night to a dissertation on Native affairs. I do not think that other honourable members are much wiser for that dissertation—I certainly am not—than they were before he started: though he displayed more confidence, or less diffidence, if you will, than the Minister of Lands in taking it up. He talked in a very light strain of this Bill, as though to provide a settlement of the matter was not difficult, and as though he knew all about it. Well, first of all, I must say he was very unfortunate in the way in which he dealt with this question when the Natives met him some time back. There can be no doubt whatever that this Bill deals with the compulsory taking of Native lands. This Bill, as it stands, says to the Natives, "You must take your choice of two ways of dealing with your land: one is to sell, and the other is to lease, to the Crown; and, if you do not do one or the other, we will simply hold a Proclamation over you." That is the position of the Bill as it stands. Now, Sir, I wish to make a few remarks about the Bill, without going at any length into details. There is no doubt that it is in the interest of the Natives that their lands to a large extent should be alienated. It is in the interest of the Natives that there should be among them a working-class. It is, to my mind, the hope of the future that there should be Natives working their way like Europeans up to positions of wealth by their own industry; that we should put the Natives in such a position that they should not fear to be dependent on their own exertions; that they should not be sitting still, trafficking in the sale of their lands to us. And at the same time the necessity of the future is, that this question should be dealt with so as to bring both races together without divisional feeling and with good-will. I realise, myself, most thoroughly that, unless this question is dealt with shortly, we have very considerable trouble before us. There is no question of larger importance both to Europeans and to Maoris than this question of Native lands, and I do not hesitate to say, notwithstanding the remarks of the honourable member for Marsden, that these Bills are trifling with the question, and that they do not show, and cannot show, that knowledge on the question which is essential to dealing with it effectively. Are we going to take the Native lands by force? "No, certainly not," the Minister says at once. Are we going to pursue the course which has been indicated by some of the public prints, and in public utterances, sometimes by public men—are we going to force the Natives, by a system of rating, into parting with their lands? I say such a policy as that will not work out. I hold that the Natives in receiving privileges must also accept liabilities; but to force upon

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them liabilities before you have assured them of their privileges is a course that will not work out fairly or justly. That is, I think, a simple axiom, and one that need hardly be laid down. Do not let there be any mistake about it. You cannot deal with this question, as you are trying to do, in a sort of half-hearted way, as in the case of the graduated tax, where your object is to break up the lands of certain Europeans. You cannot by such means force the Natives to dispose of their land. That is not the way to approach this question. How does this Bill propose to deal with this question? It puts—if I may use a familiar illustration—the cart before the horse. The first thing you have to do is to ascertain the ownership of the land. You cannot take a single step until you have it. And what does this Bill do? It entirely ignores that. It starts with taking the land. The whole policy of the Government with regard to European and Native lands seems to me to resolve itself into the question, Whose land shall I take? And then when they have got it they do not know what to do with it. As I said, the first thing to do is to determine the ownership of the land. The second thing to do is to survey according to the results of the investigation that decides upon that ownership; and then you may determine, in accordance with such policy as you may lay down, as to how these lands may best be distributed as between the Natives and Europeans in the future—that is, whether you want to deal with the land primarily and absolutely through the Crown, or whether you will deal with it on a system of free-trade, allowing Europeans to acquire land when the title has been ascertained and when there are the means of acquiring the land with some security of tenure. Our whole policy, for years past, has been very much confused; but there is no doubt in my mind that this Bill is utterly valueless, and the whole legislation bearing on the matter that you are bringing down this session will prove virtually valueless, until you make a clean sweep of your present Native legislation affecting the investigation of titles through your Native Land Court. That legislation, of course, started in 1865. I do not want to go back and give the whole history of the legislation, but it has been a subject of opportunist amendment from time to time, until it has been so overlaid that not even any lawyer or expert in Native matters in the country understands that legislation. You ought, to my mind, to set to work a Commission of two or three men of the very highest quality: not men who are interested in Native-land transactions—not such a Commission as we had a short time ago, which commanded no respect because it was brought about by interested motives—but we want a Commission consisting of the highest legal talent, coupled with the highest expert knowledge of Maori title. When I say you have to sweep off the old legislation, I should not like it to be understood that I think there can be any absolutely clean sweep, because there are complications in re-

spect of Native lands at the present time that involve interests which must be respected. But to do this you have to get a law upon the statute-book under which a good Court can work, and you have, as I have said, first to ascertain the title, secondly to get the land surveyed, and you have, at the same time, or thereafter, to determine your course in dealing with those lands both in the interests of the Maori and the public. Now, what have the Government been doing? They have no policy, and they are not likely to have any policy. They have nobody among them who has any definite views. With all due respect to my honourable friend opposite (Mr. Cadman), I may say I have never known what his Native-land policy has been. I have never known what he was going to do, and have never understood the Bills which have been brought down. That may have been my stupidity. But I say we want a Minister of Native Affairs who, in regard to Native legislation, will accommodate himself to the stupidity of men like myself. No one who is acquainted with the subject will deny that the law in respect of Native titles is in great confusion. Just to illustrate what I mean a little out of this Bill: My honourable friend the Minister of Lands approaches the thing with the lightest heart possible, and the Premier with a still lighter heart, and he talks of bringing in a law affecting Native titles which has no relation to the law that has guided the ascertainment of titles in the past. He talks of quietly establishing the rule of numerical majorities tyrannizing over minorities, which Ministers have been establishing in the liquor law. There will come considerable trouble through adopting that principle. Then, we have here a number of other questions, which are dealt with in a way which shows that the Government have no understanding of the intricacy of Native titles. Let me take clause 12. That is a clause which will illustrate what I mean. As to the whole question of Native shares in land, any one acquainted with these matters will admit that probably half the difficulties existing on the East Coast and elsewhere turn upon this point of establishing shares in land without really recognising the Native customs and laws that rule the apportionment of Native lands. I hope the Minister who represents the Native race will tell us what he thinks of this Bill. He has been very silent about it. I venture to think that if he supports the Bill as it stands now, and if he does not at the Native Affairs Committee take care that the measure shall be altered very considerably, he will have very little chance of appearing here again as a representative of the Native race. I am not going to trouble the House with many more observations. I am not satisfied with this Bill. I am content that it should go to the Native Affairs Committee, because the Committee might unravel some of the difficulties of the measure; but I am quite sure that the Bill cannot become law in anything like its present shape. Let me make one other criticism, and that is with regard to the drafting. I do not know who drafts these

Bills, but certainly nothing could be very much worse than the arrangement of this Bill, and the general difficulty there is in ascertaining its meaning. I will not detain the House any longer. I hope that the honourable members of the Native race here will take good heart in regard to this Bill, and that they will determine to make it something which represents their views; and if they do that they will find plenty of people in this House who will help them. It is not a question of party at all. I am sure they will admit that myself and others on this side of the House have dealt with this question in an earnest desire to serve their interests, and we shall continue to do so.

Mr. CADMAN.—I intend to say a few words on this Bill; but I find that, owing to leaving it so long, many of the notes I have made have been dealt with by others. We have had speeches from three members of the late Government, all of course in opposition to the Bill—perhaps legitimately so—and all expressing different opinions. I venture to say, if you took all the North Island members in this House and asked their opinions on Native affairs you would hardly get any two to coincide. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay thought we should individualise the titles down to either families or hapus. We might individualise titles down as far as hapus, but I do not think the Natives could afford to go any lower than that, because anybody who knows anything of Native matters, especially in regard to the ownership of land, knows that to individualise titles down to individuals would in surveys alone swamp the whole value of the land. Then he gave us his opinion in regard to the Judges of the Native Land Court. He thought that a large number of Judges should again be created, and that they should not do peripatetic work. Peripatetic work has been done away with by the present Government. The peripatetic work of Judges in the past was done at the time when his Government was in office, and, with respect to the amount of work done, I say unhesitatingly that, since we have abolished five Judges, more actual work has been done by the seven Judges than was done previously by the twelve, simply because the Judges have been constantly at work. Formerly the Judges travelled about in different districts, and they arranged with the Chief Judge when a Court was to be held: they intimated to the Chief Judge that the sitting of their Court would probably last, say, a month, and the Chief Judge would arrange accordingly for them to take another Court somewhere else in a month's time; but perhaps in a week's time their work would be finished, and the consequence would be that the Judge and some of his staff would be virtually idle for two or three weeks out of a month. Under the present system such things do not happen to nearly the same extent. I think, as far as the honourable gentleman is concerned, that he, at least, should have said nothing about peripatetic Judges. With respect to the utterances of the other members of the late Government, they

were in office for three years, and why did not they bring in a measure to deal with this subject? The present Government may claim credit for having taken the matter in hand. We all know that the question of the settlement of the surplus Native land is a burning question, and has been so for a very long time; and so, whether the present measure is workable or not, at all events the present Government have taken the matter in hand and endeavoured to face it in some way or another. We were told also by the late Native Minister (Mr. Mitchelson) that this Bill is compulsory. He said he was going to show how it was compulsory, but he did not do so. To my mind one of the weakest spots in the Bill is that it is not compulsory. Then, the leader of the Opposition gave us his opinion as to what we should do first; and his idea is that we should determine the ownership of the land first. If we are going to deal with Native lands in anything like the manner proposed in this Bill, my opinion is we should determine the value of these outside surplus lands first. We should fix the value of these lands before we put any roads through them or works on them to increase their value, so that we may not have to pay the enhanced price occasioned by our putting roads and works on them, and thus increasing their value before purchasing. With reference to the price paid for Native lands, I do not agree with what the Premier said. As far as I can see, the Natives have, on the whole, been paid fair prices for their lands. Take, for instance, the land in the back country, the land in the back of the King-country, land in the back of the Taranaki District, or the land in the Uriwera country, where it is inaccessible. What is the value of that land to any one to-day? Two or three shillings per acre is its full value. But if we were to put roads, bridges, railways, and post- and telegraph-offices in those places the value of the land would be considerably increased; and if we were to buy it we should have to pay the enhanced price brought about by the expenditure of the public money. Therefore, I say, in dealing with the Native lands under this Bill we should decide to value the land before putting an enhanced value on it by expending money on it, which would necessitate our paying the enhanced price to the owners. Then, again, with respect to the lands required to be dealt with under this Bill, the Bill does not propose to deal with all the Native lands in the North Island. The proposition is to take lands where they are supposed to be urgently required for settlement, and where they are unoccupied and lying idle. There are several blocks of this character in the Auckland District which I could name. There is a block called the Opuatia, the lands round Te Kuiti and Otorohanga, also land in the Kawhia district. There are in various districts elsewhere blocks of land suitable for settlement at present locked up. These lands are increasing in value. Before we put roads and bridges on them they were not worth more than 2s. an acre; now the Crown could not buy them under, I suppose, £1 10s. or £2 an acre.

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If we are going to deal with Native lands under this Bill we must be prepared to deal with these lands before we put roads and bridges on them to enhance the value to ourselves. In dealing with this question, to my mind we have two classes of Natives to deal with. We have, first, one lot of persons who are able to take care of themselves. Many of them appear down here in Wellington every year, and tell us distinctly they are able to look after themselves; and from what one sees of the Natives travelling about the country one feels that there are some who are able to take care of themselves. Then, we have a class who are not able to take care of themselves, and this is the class whom we should look after, and whom it is the duty of any Government to look after. It is the duty of the Government, to a certain extent, to act as a parent to these people, to be kind to them, and to be firm in what we do with them. Look at the amount of money paid to the Natives in years past. How many thousands of pounds have they received! and how much of that money is invested profitably for them to-day? Do we not all know that nine-tenths, and probably more, of it has been squandered? The Natives who have received large sums of money from the Crown, and from private individuals, have simply lost most of it, having no idea of the value of money. With respect to this Bill in its present shape, so far as I can see, the Natives, at all events, have no cause for complaint. My experience of Natives has been that they are always prepared to grumble at the existing state of things. They have nothing themselves to propose, and, at the same time, they object to anything and everything introduced by the Government or by any one else on their behalf. To reduce this Bill to practice, we should start with the assumption that its object is to settle the surplus lands of the Natives—the lands they are not able to use—lands lying unoccupied. The Bill proposes to set up a Board to fix the value, and to allow the Natives to sell at that value or throw their lands open under the land-laws of the colony. The trouble in dealing with this question is to get the Natives to do anything at all. My experience of Natives, on the whole, is that they sit down and do nothing; and the trouble is to move them, and move them in the right way. And if this Bill is to be amended, as probably it will be, by the Native Affairs Committee, it will do a great deal towards assisting the Natives to move in the direction we require them to move. Of course there are objections to the way the Bill is drafted; there are objections to the details of the Bill, and these are Committee objections. I could raise many points in which, I think, the Bill might be suitably amended, but as they are Committee objections there is no use in going into these details now. To my mind the weak point in the Bill is that there is no alternative proposal for the Natives interested to sell or lease. If you pass the Bill in its present shape as regards that portion, the Natives will simply do nothing, and nothing

happens; and the Bill therefore in that respect will be a dead-letter until amendment is made. Then, there is a clause in the Bill compelling the land to be brought before the Native Land Court. It seems to me that that clause would probably be better in some other Bill than this. However, that is a matter of opinion, and it is a matter that probably the Committee will deal with. Then, with respect to the pre-emptive right taken in one clause of the Bill, objection is made to that in some quarters, and in other quarters people naturally think that the Crown should take the pre-emptive right. I look at this from a midway point of view. With respect to large blocks of land which are required for settlement, I think the Crown should have the prior right to the whole of it, because the Crown can deal with large blocks of land and cut them up and road them for settlement. But in the case of small blocks, say of from one to fifteen hundred or two thousand acres, which are scattered throughout the country, I do not see how the Crown can deal with them. It is hardly worth the Crown's while to buy small areas of that sort and place one or two persons on them. The whole object of Government and of Parliament and of the country is to get settlement. It is not worth the country's while to deal with these small blocks, and I think it would be just as well to allow the owners to dispose of them to Europeans in their own way, and thus achieve the settlement we all desire. In that same clause there is power given to the Board which I do not think is quite proper. That can be amended, and I think it should be. The object of the Board is to ascertain the value of the land, and I think that should be the sole object of the Board. At present the Board can say to a private individual whether or not he will be allowed to purchase a certain piece of land. The result of that, reduced to practice, will be that one individual will be told that the Government does not want the land and that he can buy it. Another individual will come along, and he will be told that the Government do want the land and he cannot buy it. That will cause friction, and it will cause the Board to be put in the same position as the Railway Commissioners sometimes are in, and political influence will be imputed to the members of the Board. The sole object of the Board, I think, should be to fix the value of the land for the Government and the Natives; and I do not think it should have any other duties cast upon it. Then, with respect to what has been said about taxing the Natives, it is only fair, and we all agree, that the Natives should now begin to contribute something towards the taxation of the country. At the same time I think that the honourable member for Marsden is correct in a great measure in the views he has enunciated in that respect. If we are to tax them we should also be prepared to give them certain privileges that we possess ourselves. I think the principle of the Bill is good on the whole, but I think we should be prepared to carry out the same principle in regard to large blocks held by Europeans which are unused and unworked.

If the Natives are prepared to work their own lands and farm them, as the honourable member for Inangahua said they are doing now, these blocks should not be taken from them. I shall support the second reading of the Bill. I shall be glad to help in improving it on the Native Affairs Committee, and I hope, at all events, that we shall get some Bill through the House this session which will, in a great measure, facilitate the settlement of unused and unoccupied surplus lands in the North Island.

Mr. CARROLL.—I have to congratulate honourable members on the temperate tone with which they have criticized this measure right through, and I quite agree with the general feeling that exists in the minds of honourable gentlemen that a question of this magnitude, and of such importance in the interests of both races, should be approached carefully and gradually, and treated altogether apart from what we know as a party question; and I think every honourable member to-night had that feeling when he was discussing this measure. I quite agree with the remark made by the honourable member for Inangahua when he criticized the Bill. He described the Native-land question as being one that it is impossible to settle or do justice to in one single measure. The question is so wide, so varied in aspect, and is surrounded by such exceptional circumstances, that no ingenuity of man could contrive a single measure that could possibly deal with it in all its details. Therefore it follows that we must deal with this question by a series of Bills. For instance, in dealing with the Native Reserves Bill and the administration of Native Reserves we cannot possibly include in that measure proposals dealing with surplus Native lands. Then, again, we have another class of legislation which was called into existence by the peculiar circumstances attached to the cases. For instance, the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act. There are special circumstances and conditions which surround those lands which we could not possibly deal with in a policy measure of this kind, in which we attempt to treat with the future disposal of Native lands. There are various other aspects of this question which go to prove the truth of the honourable gentleman's remark, that it is impossible to deal with the question as a whole in one large comprehensive measure. I think, under the circumstances, we might confine our criticisms to the principle which is laid down in the Bill before us. Although the criticism has wandered unnecessarily over ground which is not touched by this Bill, still, at the same time, it cannot very well be avoided, because the Bill to a great extent treats with new machinery which is called into force to carry it into effect. You have to bring the Native Land Court in; you have to bring in a Board to value; you have then the system by which the Natives can elect to dispose of their lands; and so forth. Now, the Bill, shortly, is this: It provides that, when the Government ascertain that certain areas of Native land in

this colony are desirable for settlement, they shall proclaim such areas. After doing so they will then form a Board which is here created in this Bill, and they will move that Board to value the land. Then, when the value is ascertained, the Natives will be required to elect whether they will sell to the Crown or lease. In the case of sale, it is herein provided how it shall be carried out, and, in the case of lease, the lease is under the land-laws of the colony. That is a debatable point. I myself am not in favour of this. I think we should provide a different system from that. Then, if the Natives elect to sell to the Crown, the Crown is empowered to pay them either in cash or in debentures, or partly in cash and partly in debentures. Now, it was only by an Act of last year that we brought the system of purchasing land by debentures into vogue, and it is my firm conviction that, had it been in force years ago, many of the Natives would be in a better and more prosperous condition than they are in to-day. Because, as a rule, the Natives have not been provident with their money. They have received time after time large sums of money in payment of their lands from the Government, as well as from private persons, and in a short time they have spent all the purchase-money, and really it has done them little or no good; and I have every reason to believe that under this system there would be always an annuity to the Natives. Then, Sir, a point that was dealt with by speakers in this same connection was the absence of an alternative: that is, if the Natives did not elect to sell to the Government the land was hung up thereby. Of course that was an unsatisfactory state of things; but this only proves the contention that the Bill is not compulsory—that it is purely voluntary on the part of the Natives if they elect to sell to the Government, and, if they do not, the land does not go from them by any compulsory measure. And furthermore, this is toned down by the provision in the Bill that the Governor can alter and revoke any Proclamation that he may place over any Native land; consequently the result would be that, if the Natives did not elect to sell to the Governor, the Governor, in all probability, would remove the Proclamation, and allow the Natives to do what they liked with the land. I think it would be only fair that, where the Natives do not wish to sell, the Government should not keep the Proclamation for ever and a day over their lands. Now, treating of the objections advanced by the various speakers, I have very little to say. Taking the speeches right through, there was nothing of a very serious nature advanced against the Bill by any of the speakers. First of all, with regard to the honourable member for Hawke's Bay, his views were free-trade and the appointment of District Judges,—who, he thought, should work on the going-backward system,—and individualisation of Native titles. Now, with regard to free-trade, I have to remark that it would not at all suit the interests of the Natives and the colony generally that general free-trade should be allowed in Na-

Mr. Cadman

tive lands; because there are Native lands held by a large number of Natives not near the centres of population, of a rugged and inferior character, and that could not very well be sold on the free-trade principle, for the reason that there are so many owners, as a rule, now put by the Native Land Court into blocks of land that, if any one were to undertake a purchase by the usual process of going and collecting signatures, he would have to be prepared to devote his whole lifetime before he would get a complete title. It is through this pernicious system, which was brought into operation by the Act of 1873, that we have now to face the question of validating the titles on the East Coast. The greatest drag on free-trade you can have is the difficulty and the obstacles in the way of securing what you may call an effective tenure. The thing is impossible. I do not go so far as to say that there should never be any free-trade, but I would confine the free-trade to such lands as are under absolute title—that is to say, where lands are individualised—and much land is now held in fee-simple by the Natives. There is no reason why such owners should not be allowed to dispose of their lands as they will, because in such cases they hold under a European title. There is no question about it: that in cases where they do hold absolutely under European title they should be allowed to deal with their land the same as Europeans; and they should be allowed to bear the same responsibilities in respect to the general taxation of the country as Europeans. But where a man is not in this position, where you tie him up in a block of land with his share undefined, and it is impossible to tell what part of the block he can dispose of, he should be treated differently. Then, the other question touched upon by the honourable member for Hawke's Bay was the appointment of District Judges: he thought they should gradually work out and individualise the whole country—that they should gradually clothe the whole of the lands with titles. That is a work that would take years to do. It is all very well when the character of the land will admit of individualisation—where we have land of such value that we could go to the expense of subdivision. But where you have lands—as is mostly the case with the Natives now—not of a first-class value, and with innumerable owners, the cost of surveying and of individualising the portions that the Court must define would use up the whole value of the land. So in that respect it would be impossible to carry out this theory of a general individualisation all over the country. The system might be modified, as was suggested by himself, and in many cases the lands could be “hapuised” or tribalised. That is going on at the present time. The honourable gentleman could not have kept account in his mind of these things. At the present time we have divided the colony into four Land Court districts, and in each district we have appointed one or two Judges, and these Judges are at work in each of their respective districts to clothe Native

lands, as fast as applications come in, with titles. That work is going on now, and wherever the Natives see it is for their benefit and advantage to apply for subdivision of interests they do so. And not only is the Native Land Court Judge of each district engaged in doing this subdivision work, but Recorders, as well, are helping the Judges to individualise titles. Then, the honourable member for Eden had a particular objection to section 18 of the Bill, and he argued that, in consequence of this section, the Natives would be placed under a difficulty by being compelled to pay the cost of roading and other expenses in connection with the land that was to be taken up. Now, my reading of this clause is that the expenses therein mentioned are the expenses which they at present pay in the investigation of Native titles, and no more. In the present case, without this measure passing into law, the Natives have to stand the survey of the land, and when they come before the Court they have to pay the expenses that are necessary in the investigation of title: so it is no new thing at all. The honourable member for Inangahua dealt in a very generous manner with this measure, and I must say he gave a very clear description of the principle of it. He said he had a few objections to make, but they were Committee objections, and that he had made notes on the margin of his copy of the Bill as to the various clauses he wished to amend. He emphasized one objection, and that was to the eternal lease, which more than one honourable gentleman has alluded to. There are very good grounds, especially those advanced by him and the Native members, on which the Native lands proposed to be dealt with by this measure should not come under this system of leasing. I myself, as I have already explained, am not in favour of the eternal lease; but we have in other measures dealing with Native lands a system under which they can be leased for not more than twenty-one years with revaluation, and I say, to be uniform, we should have one system running through all our Native land legislation. I have no hesitation in saying that I believe my honourable colleague the Minister of Lands will give way on that point. The honourable member for Maitua made a strong objection to the principle of legislating by Select Committees. I think, on a question like this,—the Native question,—which has so many parts, that it is impossible for this House, by rushing it through Committee of the Whole, to do justice to it. I am fully convinced that Native legislation proposed in this House should, after the second reading, be all referred to the Native Affairs Committee. It could there be dealt with carefully and prudently, clause by clause, and there the Native members especially could have an opportunity of having every single line explained to them, and also the bearing of every clause. This they could not possibly get in this House in the hurried transition of a Bill through Committee of the Whole. I am fully convinced that when this Bill goes to the Native Affairs Committee it will receive consideration

in the direction of amendments, so that it may be made suitable and in the interests of both races. My own views in regard to the Native question travel in a direction beyond this Bill. I am quite in favour of the Bill. I think there are parts in it which might well be altered, but I say that this measure, with careful attention and consideration, can be made a very good and valuable one indeed. It is an initiatory step, I take it, in the direction of establishing some system under which in future the waste lands of the Natives may be administered on a different principle from what they are now. What is the present principle in force? The Government, through their agents, acquire these lands when there is no valuation put upon them. The agents have simply to make the best bargain they can with each individual. The patience of the Native is worn out—he has already large calls upon him; he gets into debt, and in the end he sacrifices his share for a mere song. That is the present mode of acquiring Native land. The Native in many cases refuses to sell to the Native Land-Purchase Commissioner. He says to the Land-Purchase Commissioner, "I can get a great deal more for my land from private individuals than I can from you." That was the contention at Waikato. The Government were offering the owners much lower prices than the value of the land. But time had its effect, and, in many cases, a good percentage of them sold at prices fixed by the Government Commissioner. That is a system we should not adhere to. We should take up a broad and fair principle; and, consequently, I admire this Bill because of these points: that before the Government acquire lands from the Natives each Native's share is to be valued, so that it cannot be said that the Government are getting land out of the Natives for little or nothing. We are in the position, in a sense, of guardians and custodians of the interests of the Natives, and we should be mindful of that duty, and of our duty to the European population, and to aid the general progress of the colony. We should in every respect deal as fairly and honestly with the Natives. At the present time, although in many cases the Land-Purchase Commissioners will give a fair price and the full value for the land, still, taking the average price, they do not do so, and this Bill proposes that before the Government acquire Native lands such lands shall be valued by a Board upon which the Natives will have representation. It may be that the Native representation on that Board is not sufficient, and objection has been taken to that by some honourable members; but their representation on the Board can be increased—that is a mere Committee consideration, I take it. In some respects the Bill might be altered with advantage. I think the State ought to demand that all Native lands in this colony shall be clothed with a legal title: that is the first thing to attain. That would necessarily mean survey. I think we all agree on that point. The ownership of the land should first be ascertained; then the State should in-

sist upon the settlement of the land either by the Natives themselves or by Europeans, or it should be acquired by the Government. Then the State should give every assistance where it was desirable—where they saw evidence of settlement coming about among the Natives in different parts of the colony—to those who were willing to settle their lands, because it should not matter so much whether these lands were settled by Natives or by Europeans as long as they were settled to their full productive power. Now, in many cases it would be a great help to the Natives, by making respectable settlers of them, and making them good citizens. That could be done in many parts of the colony; and I should think, in carrying out a system of that kind, there might be some method of sandwiching the Native and European settlements throughout the country. This would be in the interest of the Natives, who would be able to copy the example of their neighbours. They would be brought into touch with the settlers. The proper way to settle the Native question is to bring the Maori alongside of the European. The sooner you do that, the sooner you get a solution of the Native question; and the old ways of living of the Natives could be then entirely obliterated without any violent wrench. Outside the lands sufficient for settlement, to which I have just referred, there are surplus lands which could be disposed of. This Bill refers particularly to the surplus and waste lands owned by Natives in New Zealand which are fit for settlement. I say in that case the Government should have the prior claim, at a fair valuation, to acquire those lands. The time may not be far off when we may get what we consider to be the perfection of Native legislation by a process of evolution—when we shall have a more comprehensive way of dealing with the Natives and the settlement of the country. I think, in future, we shall have the co-operation of the Natives and Europeans in the different districts. You will find the Natives occupying seats on the Land Boards and on local bodies. I believe that, when this Bill goes before the Native Affairs Committee, every member of the Committee will insist that, though the measure is a Government policy measure, the element of party shall be laid aside, and that every one will endeavour to turn it out in such a form that it will be creditable to Parliament, and in the best interests of the country.

Mr. LAKE.—Sir, after the very clear manner, and the conciliatory manner also, in which the honourable member who has just sat down has expressed himself I feel almost ashamed to get up and say a word or two, because I have never in my life been brought much into contact with the Natives, and I do not know half a dozen words of the Maori language. And yet, as living on the borders of one of the largest tracts of Native land in either of the two Islands, I know something of the present system of dealing with Native lands. I may, in the first place, say that, from what I have gathered from those

Mr. Carroll

who have studied the subject thoroughly, it appears to me that we have not made any progress whatever, but rather the reverse, in our Native land-legislation since 1865. This Bill is not at all what I had hoped to see, after what we had heard about it. It has come at a very late period of the session—which is much to be regretted, because I did hope, from what had been said, that a serious and earnest attempt would be made to grapple with the Native question this session. That, I am afraid, is now almost out of the question. But, such as this Bill is, I should like to say one or two words on the question as it strikes me. In the first place, I am glad to see in it the principle of the valuation of Native lands. I live on the edge of the King-country, where the Government have for some eight years locked up some of the best country we have left; and there is very little of the Maori country now left, and it is really lying idle, and running to waste for want of use. I am sorry to say that the Natives have not been given a chance of selling their lands, for I am convinced that a large quantity of that country close to the railway-line, though not immediately bordering on it, could be bought if the Government were prepared with the necessary funds, and would instruct their agents to give a reasonable price. If the Government take away all power of action from the Natives it is only proper and right that a fair valuation should be made of the land. I am not blaming one Government more than another, for, although Mr. Ballance issued the Proclamation, it was continued by members on this side of the House. Looking at the details of this measure, I cannot help thinking that the Board is not such as would give satisfaction. I think it would be very much more in the interests both of the Natives and of Europeans, and of settlement, if some man of high character, some one invested with the status of a Supreme Court Judge, some one to whom the Natives could look up with perfect certainty that he would not be influenced by any political motives whatever, were appointed instead of the Board. I do not like this Board, because it seems to me the Maoris are only put there for the sake of being completely ignored, as they can always be outvoted. Still, I think that in Committee we shall possibly be able to improve the Bill, and I hope we may be able to alter this power for the better. I think it is perfectly clear, from what is known in the Native Office, that the prices now offered for this proclaimed land along the railway would only be fair for land about the Taupo Plains. This land is worth from £1 to £1 10s. per acre, but about two-thirds is only second-class, and, if a fair valuation were offered to the Maoris, would be settled at once. Regarding section 7, it seems to me, and from what I have heard from the last speaker, to have in it an element of compulsion. Now, I have known land that has been proclaimed for eight years and not used, and there are no indications of the Government cancelling that Proclamation. If the Natives generally choose

for any reason not to sell the land or to lease it in the terms of the Land Act of 1892, it is all very well to say that there is nothing compulsory in this Bill, but the Proclamation is kept on, and the Natives cannot sell to others; so they are compelled ultimately to sell at the Government's own price. In the district I am speaking of the land could be bought at a reasonable price as soon as the title has been individualised and the land cut up into blocks of moderate size. There are one or two clauses in the Bill that strike me—possibly, in my ignorance—as dangerous. Take clause 9. I think I can explain what the object of it is. It seems the Government, who are placing themselves in the position of trustees, are interfering with trusts in a way they have no right to do. I may be wrong in my interpretation; but it seems to me that as long as these powers are kept in the Bill we shall be liable to have more serious legal difficulties afterwards. Section 9 is an instance of that—perhaps one of the strongest of any; also section 12. In the 15th section there is provision for reserving lands for the Natives. It seems to me that that requires some explanation. In my own district, where the Natives have no encouragement, and are practically free from individual ownership, they are running large flocks of sheep, and only last year the finest pen of lambs produced in the whole district belonged to some Maoris near Te Awamutu. I do not see any reason why we should not allow the Maoris to occupy the same areas of land as white people. The great bulk of the country is only second-class, though some of it is first-class. It is very good pastoral country, but still only second-class at the best, and such restricted areas as shown in section 15 are utterly ridiculous. In section 22 a Native is declared to be of age at seventeen; and why this is done, when a white man is not legally of age until twenty-one, I do not understand, but I presume it is to agree with the provisions in the Land Bill. Section 26 seems to me to meet the principal difficulty, but will have to be altered to suit lands now proclaimed. The latter part of the Bill could be made much more satisfactory if the Government, when they proclaimed the land, would fix a certain date, as clearly as possible, for which the land was to be proclaimed. If the Government could see their way to proclaim the land for, say, three years, and then, if in that time they could not deal with it themselves, take their Proclamation off, and let the Maoris deal with some one else, the Bill would be more satisfactory. I hope that when the Bill comes back from the Committee it will be very considerably altered; and if we want to make it a success—which I hope will be done—it will be necessary to improve it very much.

Mr. SHERA.—Sir, it is not my intention to-night to do more than make a few observations on the Bill. What I have to state upon the subject I will state when the Bill comes back to us from the Native Affairs Committee. There are one or two things I wish to say

about the Bill, although the hour is very late. I look upon it as a forward movement in the interests of settlement, and also in the interests of the Native race. Under the provisions of this Bill the Natives will get a much fairer price for their land than they have been accustomed to receive. In many of its clauses there is great room for improvement. There is a difference of opinion among honourable members as to whether the 7th clause is compulsory or not in its effect. In my opinion, Sir, unless it is made compulsory the Bill will be of no use whatever. In this respect I agree with the honourable member, the ex-Native Minister. If it be left merely optional it will be almost waste paper. It is better to have it made compulsory, and its effect may be good. But, Sir, in making it compulsory it will be absolutely necessary to give the Natives the option of an additional mode of parting with their land: that is, if they neither elect to sell it nor to otherwise convey it to the Crown, they should have the choice of selling it, or leasing it, to the highest bidder in accordance with the land-laws of the colony, or of using it themselves. To my mind, this would be a great improvement, and it would be just and fair; I believe it would be not only in the interests of the Natives but of settlement. In this Bill there is a very great power—almost absolute power—given to the Government of the day: in fact it is almost a despotic power over the Native people and over their lands. It must be evident, then, Sir, that there should be no dealings in land by any Native Minister to whom would be intrusted the administration of this Bill,—that no Minister should be allowed to traffic in any lands, directly or indirectly, for himself. I think it must be evident, also, that no member of the Cabinet should be permitted to traffic in any Native land for himself, when we take into consideration the extraordinary power that is given to the Government of the day to proclaim districts and to buy from the Natives for the State. I must say I am somewhat puzzled in respect to clause 22, as to why such a clause has been proposed in the Bill. The clause reads as follows:—

“A Native over the age of seventeen years shall, for the purposes of this Act, be deemed of full age, and may make any election, execute any instrument, give discharges, and do all acts and things which such Native could do if of full age.”

I think it is a great misfortune that such a clause was put into the Bill; it will raise the suspicions of the Natives, and the least suspicion of any attempt to get hold of their lands improperly should be guarded against. I cannot understand how this clause got into the Bill. There is another clause in the Bill which, to my mind, is of importance. I would draw the attention of the House to clause 7,—the latter part of the clause, subsection (d),—“which person and place shall”—I think it should be “may”—“be fixed by the Governor.” I think, Sir, there is a great question involved in this, and that under this speculators might

be able to mop up all the lands in the country. I would just say that much will depend upon the administration of this Act. It may be used as a great engine of evil, or it may be a great force for good. It may produce strife which would bring disastrous results upon this colony, or it may conduce to plenty and prosperity among the Native people. That will depend very much upon its administration. In many respects it will apply at the present time more to the lands North of Auckland than to the King-country; and it seems in many respects, to my mind, to be framed with a view to be brought into operation in the North of Auckland. It is well known to honourable members that on the question of equal electoral rights with ourselves to the Natives I hold, in common with a number of members of this House, somewhat advanced views; and, when considering a question of this sort, it is forcibly impressed upon myself, and, I think, Sir, it should similarly impress every member of this House, that, as we are placing equal responsibilities upon the Natives, we must give them very soon equal electoral rights with ourselves. I intend to support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. HOUSTON.—I do not intend to make any lengthy remarks, the hour being late, and for the reason that the Bill is to be referred to the Native Affairs Committee, of which I am a member. But I would say, in reference to a Bill which passed this House last session, that, in order to make that Bill perfect, such a Bill as this should be brought into the House. I consider this Bill the sequel to the Bill passed last session, and I hold, with others, that where lands are held in large areas by private individuals it is a bar to progress. For a great many years I have felt this to be a bar to progress in the district that I have the honour to represent. In that part of the country there are large areas held by Natives from which they derive no benefit; and that has been a bar to progress in that district. As an illustration of what I say, I may mention Hokianga. In that county there is more than three-fourths of the land held by the Natives lying waste and idle. They are deriving no benefit from it, and are contributing nothing to the general rates by which roads are made and maintained; and I believe if this measure were made to apply to the Native lands in the North of Auckland alone it would be of great benefit to that district. It has been said by some honourable members that this Bill is drastic and compulsory. Well, Sir, if it is not compulsory, I consider that the defect of the Bill. Unless it is made compulsory I think it will be inoperative, and if any means can be devised to make it compulsory it will be for the benefit of the Natives themselves, and will be of great benefit to the North. I think it would be unwise, as a member of the Native Affairs Committee, to enter into any lengthened arguments for or against the Bill. I certainly approve of the general principle of the Bill. There are many parts of it which I consider ought to be amended, and I have no doubt the Committee

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which has given its attention to other Bills will try to make this a good and wise measure. I have preached the principle contained in this Bill for many years in my district, and I regretted to hear the honourable member for the Northern Maori District speak as he did. He certainly does not understand the mind of the Natives in that part of the colony. I believe that the Natives in the northern district will agree with the principle contained in this Bill. I have had many conversations with Natives on the subject, and they have approved of the principle embodied in this Bill. If the measure becomes law I believe the Natives there will take advantage of its provisions; but, in order to make the thing complete, I think all restrictions should be removed from Native lands, especially in the North. If the Natives are willing to sell to the Government, well and good; but if they are not satisfied with the price offered by the Government they should be allowed to sell to any Europeans who like to buy. The large tracts of land from which they are deriving no benefit have been an injury to them, and they certainly have been a great bar to the progress of the North, and, if we recognise the fact that the holding of large areas by private individuals, whether Europeans or Natives, is a bar to progress, then the Government is justified in removing this bar, whether the land belongs to Natives or to Europeans. I shall support the Bill, and shall do all in my power as a member of the Native Affairs Committee to put it into good shape. I feel satisfied that in the consideration of this measure the question of party will be cast aside, and that each and all will do their utmost to make this a proper measure.

MR. W. KELLY.—Sir, as a member of the Native Affairs Committee, I have to say that I do not intend to speak at any length on the Bill to-night. It will be thoroughly analysed when it goes before the Native Affairs Committee, and each clause will be discussed, and amended to suit the circumstances of the case. During the first session that the present Government held office they submitted a Bill to the House that I regret very much has not been adhered to. That Bill, Sir, proposed to repeal, first, all the Native Acts that are at present in existence; and had that policy been carried out I think the country would have received great benefit from it, because we know all over the country, wherever Native Land Courts sit, or wherever Native agents and lawyers appear on behalf of the Natives, it is found exceedingly difficult to pass the different blocks through the Court so as to avoid future litigation. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Cadman), when he introduced that measure, I must say, did his utmost to endeavour to get it through. Joint Committees were appointed by both Houses, but the opposition was so strong that it was almost impossible to succeed in getting it through. But I think the Government, with the large support they have had in the present Parliament, should have attempted before now to pass a measure that would place Native legislation on a dif-

ferent footing altogether. With regard to this Bill, I do not know whether it is going to be of any use to the country or not. I may mention, with regard to the district of Rotorua, that the Thermal Springs Act was passed in 1881, and, in regard to the lands that are comprised in this Act—some seven thousand acres—nothing has been done by the Government in the way of purchasing the land from the Natives; in point of fact, the district has been practically shut up,—surveys have been stopped, and everything that was in any way tending to promote the settlement of the district has been practically retarded; and I am only afraid that this Bill will, to a great extent, be of a similar character. Unless the Government intends to operate under this Bill—and they cannot do that unless this House votes a sufficient sum of money to enable them to acquire lands—I do not believe in this legislation at all. I believe in giving the Natives a free hand to deal with their lands as best they can. I have always advocated this policy since coming into the House. With regard to all land outside what the Government want for settlement, I think the Natives should be allowed to do what they like with it, and get what they can for it. They have got a very small price for the land they have disposed of to the Government; but under the present Bill I believe they will fare better, because I have no doubt a fair and reasonable price will be put on the land by the Board. What we want most at the present time in regard to Native matters is a large number of Judges. I do not approve of the present policy of the Government, with regard to the dismissal of a number of Native Land Court Judges. There were ten or twelve when they took office. These Judges were actively at work; and we are now told that there is as much work done by the seven that remain as was done by the twelve. I cannot agree with that statement, because I know there is nothing like the same amount of work done; and all the Native officers in the centres are overworked, and there are not enough Judges to deal with the work that is daily coming in. By a return laid on the table last year there were some two thousand claims waiting to be heard in the Auckland Registrar's District. I have always held that the Judges of the Native Land Court are not properly paid. I believe in giving the Native Land Court Judges good salaries. A Land Court Judge has to decide upon property of very great value. Some blocks are valued up to as much as £100,000. The other day, when at Napier, I was told there was a block going through the Land Court valued at from £22,000 to £25,000. Receiving the small salaries they do, Judges of the Native Land Court must lie under great temptation; and I should give them large salaries, and expect them to do their work properly; and I would keep them constantly at it. All over the Auckland Provincial District applications have been made to have lands passed through the Court, but no Judge is available to take up the work. I do not know that there is any use discussing this Bill. There are several clauses that I have marked

down to discuss, in order to show where amendments should be made, and I will endeavour to get those clauses amended at the proper time. I think, on the whole, the Bill is in the right direction. I believe the Natives will be better off under this Bill than they are at present—they will, at all events, get a higher price for their land—but I shall endeavour to get the Bill amended so that it will be of general utility.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, at this late hour of the night it is not my intention to occupy the time of the House at any length in reply, and, besides, the reception the Bill has met with to-night as a whole is, I think, very favourable; and a great many of the speeches we have had were in reply to speeches delivered by other honourable members. However, there are a few points I should like briefly to refer to before the second reading is carried. First, we find that a considerable amount of the discussion we have had to-night has been in connection with Native legislation of the past. Sir, we had the leader of the Opposition giving us a speech on this subject to-night, and I am sure there is no one more competent in this House to deal with the subject than he is, because of his long connection with the Native Lands Department, long before he became a member of the House, and because of the long experience he has had during the time he has been a member of the House. I am sure he must be convinced of the very great difficulty there is in dealing with this subject of Native-land legislation. The honourable gentleman has said so to-night, and I am sorry he did not give us more of his experience, and did not say by what process we could make this Bill more acceptable to the country and to the Natives than we have done. But I hope we shall get his assistance in this matter; and in this connection I may say that I am sorry he is not a member of the Native Affairs Committee, because had I known earlier that this measure was likely to go to that Committee I should only have been too glad to have his name put on the Native Affairs Committee, so that he might have given us the advantage of his experience on that Committee. The leader of the Opposition asked why I was in charge of the Bill to-night, and he found fault with the Government because we had no person who had full control of the Native Department. Now, Sir, I think that the House, after listening to the speech delivered by the Native Member of the Executive (Mr. Carroll), could come to no other conclusion than that the Government have got good assistance in the Cabinet when they have got Mr. Carroll to advise them on Native affairs. The reason why I have charge of the Bill to-night is this: that I have for some time back taken charge of the Native Land Purchase Department, and, as this Bill deals entirely with the purchase of Native lands, it fell to my lot to take charge of it. And during the time that I have had charge of the Native Land Purchase Department I find that it is as I thought—what we want in this Native Department is an honest desire to do what is right for the country and

also for the Natives. There is nothing difficult about the purchase of Native lands further than to act in a straightforward and upright manner in connection with the whole subject, and to see, when we endeavour to purchase land from the Natives, that we protect the interests of the colony, and at the same time do what is right and just to the Natives themselves. That is the whole matter, and it does not require any great expert to do that: you need business knowledge, and a desire to do your duty faithfully and honestly. We have had three speeches to-night to which I wish to refer; but, before I leave the leader of the Opposition, there are one or two points raised by him that call for notice, and one was in connection with the eternal lease. He told the House that it was not likely the Natives would be satisfied with the disposing of their land on the eternal-lease principle. I cannot understand how honourable gentlemen who are prepared to allow the Natives to dispose of their lands entirely for cash can object to the eternal lease. Let us take, for instance, a block of land worth £2,000 purchased from the Natives. Instead of the Natives getting that £2,000 cash down, or in debentures bearing $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, if that land should be leased at $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest, for a long time to come, what is the difference? Is it not better that the Natives should have an assured income for all time than that they should get this money to dispose of as they choose, and so get through it. If those honourable gentlemen said no Native land should be sold for cash I could understand their objection to the eternal lease; but, if they are in favour of the Natives selling for cash, they cannot logically object to the eternal lease. On this question the Government are quite prepared to meet the Natives fairly. The honourable member for Mataura to-night advocated the perpetual lease. Now, he is the last man in this House who should get up and advocate the perpetual lease. He it was who destroyed the perpetual lease by giving the right of purchase; and the same thing will apply here. The honourable member for Hawke's Bay gave us to-night his opinion that there should be free-trade in Native land, and that a Bill of this sort would not be at all acceptable to the Natives, and would not work out well. I think he went the length of saying that the Government, in dealing with the Natives in connection with lands, was not fair, and the Natives to a certain extent were robbed of their lands by Government purchasers. Now, I would ask the House to consider for one moment—let them look back over the history of New Zealand and ask themselves this question: By whom have the Natives been robbed mostly of their land? By the Government, or by private individuals when we had the right of free-trade in Native lands? I think it will be found, if we go back over the history of the colony, if we look up its records and look up the newspapers of the day from time to time, that if there has been any robbery at all it has been done rather by private individuals than by Government officers; and I

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have no doubt this will be the case again if free-trade in Native land is allowed. Why should this House legislate at all on this subject, if it is not necessary that we should protect the Natives, as it were, from private individuals in the matter of the purchasing of their land? Why has legislation been brought in time after time, and why, when the honourable gentleman opposite was a member of the late Government, did he permit Native-land legislation? Was it not for the purpose of preventing the whole country from being purchased up by a few individuals from the Natives, and so making large profits at the expense of the country, after it had made the land valuable by the construction of roads and railways, and by colonisation generally? Then, we had three members of the late Government finding fault with this Bill, and finding fault with the Government for not bringing this measure in earlier in the session, and giving a certain length of time for its consideration. In their opinion, we had not brought in any satisfactory Native-land legislation. Now, may we not ask those honourable gentlemen what they did in the matter when they were in office? At any rate, I say they were not so successful as we have been. I feel sure the country will give us the credit of doing what we could to meet this case. We know, and every honourable member must know, the great difficulty there is in dealing with Native land, and no person can get up in the House and say, "We ought to deal with Native land and the Native population in the same way that we deal with European land and the European population." We have been told that if this measure were applied to European lands we could never get it passed through the House. I agree with that at once. But what is the difference between the Native land and the land held by Europeans? The Europeans buy their land from the Crown. They pay a price for it, and they receive a Crown grant. Now, let us take a block of a hundred thousand acres owned by a tribe or hapu of Natives. In the first place, they cannot deal with that land until such time as the colony gives them a title to it. It has to be decided to whom the land belongs; and, after that is found out, who is it gives a title to the land? Is it not the Colony of New Zealand? And to compare the position of Natives who claim to be the owners of a block of land which, perhaps, was never settled, or was never under cultivation, but to which, from some remote period, they had some right or claim under Maori custom, on which they called themselves the owners of the land, with the position occupied by European land-owners is absurd. In the first place, we recognise the old Maori custom as to ownership of land, and we set up Judges, at great expense to the colony, to find out who are the owners of the land, and to give them a title. When we do all this, we have a perfect right to say they are not to keep a larger area of land locked up than is necessary for their use. This Bill is not intended to deal with lands which the Natives can and will use, which they may stock

with cattle and sheep, and upon which they can bring up their families. It is intended entirely to deal with their surplus land, which they cannot use for their own purposes, and which they will not make use of. The question has been brought up to-night as to the area of land that is sufficient for these Natives. That area can be increased if necessary. If a hundred acres is not enough, then make it more. I shall be only too glad to give any Native who will make a good use of it the same quantity of land that a European is permitted to have. Under the Land Act, Natives who wish to dispose of a block of land will not only get a sufficient portion of this land for their own immediate use, but they will see that in disposing of the surplus land to us they will be obtaining for themselves an income over and above what they may derive from the use of the land that they retain. If a number of Natives who may have a block of thirty or forty thousand acres wish to dispose of that to the Government, and get a sum of money for it, the whole of the interest of the money involved goes to them, and they will not be dependent entirely on the area of land set apart for them to occupy. However, that is a Committee objection, and can easily be got over. Now, the honourable member for Mataura made a very strong case, or tried to make a very strong point, against the Government for bringing down legislation of this sort at a late period of the session, and for legislating, as he said, by Committee. Well, I should like to know at what time in the history of this colony the House was prepared to carry out legislation without Committees. Ever since I came into the House, and long before that period, when I read of its proceedings, I have seen time after time that certain Bills have been read a second time and referred to a Committee. Why this reference to a Committee? Is it not that we expect the whole subject to be threshed out clause by clause in a way that it is impossible to do in the House? Then, the honourable gentleman told the House to-night that if ever we saw the Bill return from the Native Affairs Committee it would be so very much altered that I should not know it. I remember that when the honourable gentleman was sitting in the seat I now occupy a Bill of his went to the Waste Lands Committee, and when it came back from the Committee it was shorn of so many of its clauses that he hardly knew it. Seeing that on that occasion he submitted to what was proposed by the Committee, he is the last man in the House who should get up and put this sort of thing to this side of the House. Then, the honourable gentleman went on to say he was assured the statement I made in connection with my colleague, Mr. Carroll, having been engaged on the Bill, and being one of the authors of it, was not correct. The statement I made was quite correct. Mr. Carroll had a great deal to do with it. It is not the Bill of one individual, but of the Government. And the Premier had also a great deal to do with it: in fact, all the Ministers assisted to put it into as good a shape as possible, so as to bring

it down to the House in a form we thought would prove acceptable to the Natives concerned, and to the people of the colony also. Then, the honourable member for Mataura went on to say that it would be confiscation if we took this Native land, as we proposed to do under the Bill. The intention of this Bill is nothing of the sort. The intention is to get sufficient land to cover the cost of survey and of putting it through the Court. We propose to apply to this land the same rule that we apply at the present time in respect to other land: that is, we add to the original value a sufficient sum to "road" the country. That money will not come from the Natives, but it will be paid by the settlers who take up the land, as they do now when they take up Crown land. So that it cannot possibly be said that we are taking from the Natives money to road their own land. Let us take a block of land, as an illustration. In such a case we would appoint a competent valuer to see what it is worth without roads. Every honourable member knows that if arterial and other roads are made through a block of land, of course the land becomes of more value in consequence. In the case of Crown lands, the increased value is added to the price, and eventually the settlers have to pay it. It cannot be said that that is in any way robbing the Natives or taking away the value of the land. If our arrangement is not carried out, how is it possible for the Natives to dispose of the land to small settlers? I ask this question of the House, and I trust they will consider it carefully. How will it be possible to dispose of the Native lands to small settlers unless there is to be some system by which the land will be surveyed and roaded? It is impossible that small settlers, with a few hundred pounds, can go into the wilderness and buy, say, four hundred acres of land from the Natives, not knowing whether there is to be a continuation of settlement or roading. The fact of the matter is that they would not go there at all; and the end would be, as it has been in the past, that some speculator would buy the whole block, and make the settlers purchasing from him pay far more for the land than the Government would have sold it for. And then, also, the Natives would be deprived of any interest in the land in the future. From the experience I have had during the time I have been Minister, I may say that in my opinion there is nothing which is more hurtful to the Natives than the receipt of lump sums for their land, because they are a class of people who do not look very much to the future, and when they get it in that way they get rid of it in all sorts of ways, and so become every year poorer as they dispose of their land: in fact, they live on their capital, and will do nothing so long as their capital lasts. This process of giving them only a living out of the interest on their capital will be of far greater advantage to them, and it will be a lasting benefit to them and to their children after them. Then, the process we have had in the past was that private surveyors got contracts from the Natives to survey the land. What has been the result

of that? The result has been that in many cases the Natives have not had the money to pay them, and they have had to pay them in land, and the end has been that in a great many cases the Government have had to come to the rescue and settle matters. In cases where that has not been done private individuals have bought up these liens over the land, and have made claims in many cases far beyond what they were entitled to. As I have said before, the honourable member for Mataura asked this House to take into consideration for a moment what would be the position if a certain number of settlers in South Canterbury, or in any other populous portion of the colony, were to be called upon by a majority in a certain district to dispose of their land to the Government. Why, there is no comparison at all between a number of settlers who have purchased their land from the Crown and a number of Natives who hold their land in common. It is not to be supposed for one moment that this measure will deal in any way with lands where the titles have been individualised. It is only intended to deal with lands that are held in common by a number of Natives, and the rule we want to apply here is that a majority of those who hold the land in common shall say whether the land should be disposed of or not. The same rule applies to companies which hold property of all sorts. Supposing a company in Wellington carries on a business of any description, and they have taken into consideration the question of selling that business: of course, it would be the majority of the shareholders of the company who would decide whether the company should sell or not. And that is exactly what ought to be done in this case—where the Natives hold land in common in large areas, a majority of them should decide whether they will dispose of the land or not. Then, another point raised by the honourable member for Mataura was in regard to the valuing of these lands, as he said, by Government officials. So far as I know, I believe the gentlemen who it is proposed shall act as a Board for the purpose of fixing the valuation are just as independent a class of men to do that work as you could get anywhere in the colony; and I say, without any hesitation, that no Government would try to bring any influence to bear upon those men, and if they did try they would not be successful, because if those gentlemen were appointed by statute to do this particular work they would be quite independent of the Government as to how they should carry out their duties. I have no doubt that honourable members who know these gentlemen will admit that they will do their duty faithfully when called upon to do so by the House, and quite independently of any Government. It is very refreshing to have statements of this sort from the honourable member for Mataura, who is quite prepared, however, to hand over to three Government officials a property worth something like £16,000,000 or £17,000,000 to deal with as they choose. Under this Bill, however, all that the Board will have to do will be to see to the valuation of the land, and that is nothing

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like such an important duty as carrying on the railways of New Zealand. In the case of the Railway Commissioners, what influence has the Government over them? And I say, without hesitation, that the gentlemen whom it is proposed to set up as a Board under this Bill will be just as independent, and will do their duty quite as faithfully, as any gentlemen who could be placed in the position. Then, there were a few remarks made by the honourable member for Wairarapa which I should like to refer to. The honourable gentleman is apparently anxious to have free-trade in land. That may be right enough from his point of view, and might suit his constituents. For my own part, I may say that I have never bought an acre of Native land, and I do not know the process by which it is gone about; but the honourable gentleman went on to say of this measure that it was very drastic in its nature, and that the Natives would not feel themselves secure in disposing of their land to the Government under its provisions—that they were always suspicious that the Government wanted to rob them. I assume that those who are well acquainted with the purchasing of Native land in their private capacity know the system under which it is gone about, and I believe that the object is to get the land as cheaply as possible from the Natives, and that they use a certain amount of soft-soap on the Natives to make them believe that they are their best friends, and that they are doing them a very great benefit in purchasing their land. When the honourable gentleman was referring to these matters it reminded me of what happened in my own country, in the Highlands of Scotland, when the Highland landlords were driving the people out of the country by eviction—setting fire to their houses and turning them away from the land which had been held by their forefathers for generations. The people, when they were persecuted in this manner, appealed to the clergymen of the district to give them some protection and advice, and they were told by the clergymen that it was the will of God that they should be so disposed of. It appears to me that there was not very much of the “will of God” in the matter, and that there was more of the will of man than the will of God in it. At any rate, it appears to me that there is something similar in connection with certain gentlemen in this country, who try to buy Native lands at a far less price than the land is worth, at the same time telling the Natives, in so many words, that it is the will of God that they should part with their land to them. I think that, on the whole, the Natives will not distrust the Government in this matter; and, if there is any distrust, it must be owing to the bad legislation in the past, and the bad administration in regard to these lands by allowing the Natives to be “got over” in the disposal of their land at less than its value. And they can only be cured by honest and straightforward administration,—by dealing with them in a way which will gain their confidence. Now, I should say this with regard to that point: that

this Bill is to prevent anything in the shape of robbery of the Natives in the purchasing of their land by any Government officer, because it first provides that the value of the land is to be ascertained by an independent Board—a Board in which the Natives themselves will have a voice. If the price is fixed before the Natives are called upon to decide whether they will dispose of it or not they know what the land is worth. There is no back-door influence afterwards. They simply know what they are going to get for the land if they part with it, and they have then to elect whether they will do so or not. If they elect to do so, of course they must be satisfied with what they receive. Certainly, after the arrangements are complete, the Natives will receive the value of the land as fixed by the Board: that is, they will have the Government security that they will get their money or the interest of their money. It has been stated that any amount of Native land could be bought if we had the money to purchase it. This Bill makes provision for circumstances in which we do not want a lot of money at all, because we know that a large number of Natives do not wish to get cash for their land. They are quite willing to take debentures, and some of them who do not wish to sell the land will be satisfied with debentures, so that Government will be getting areas of land that could not be got in any other way for the purposes of settlement, without having to find large sums of money for the purpose. I have no hesitation in saying that if this Bill is passed—anything that requires amendment I have no doubt will be amended in Committee—by this House, and is honestly administered, we shall find in a few years that the Natives will be satisfied in the matter. I may point out, as an example of what can be done, that the effect of the measure passed last year in connection with the West Coast Reserves is that the Natives are actually bringing their land under the Public Trustee for the purpose of being able to lease it themselves. And the same thing can be applied here. Suppose a number of Natives, who hold land at the present time in common, agree to dispose of it to the Government, either by making it Crown lands right off or by leasing it, they themselves can become tenants of their own land, and individualise their title, and in that way do what could not be done in any other way. And that is the reason why the age is fixed at seventeen, to enable these young Natives to get the same advantage of acquiring their own lands as the Europeans have got. If a block of land is thrown open for settlement you allow Europeans' sons who are seventeen years of age to become settlers. Why debar Natives from becoming settlers at that age? We hear a great deal said in this House about having the same law for the Europeans and for the Natives; and when we try to make the same law—that is, to enable Natives of seventeen years to become settlers, even as Europeans youths do now—we are immediately met with the objection, Why do you allow a Native of seventeen years of age to

do this sort of thing? All this sort of thing simply amounts to this: Honourable members have not given the attention to the measure which they might have given; they have not got the information, and they do not know the exact opinions of the Government in the matter. However, I intend to propose that the Bill be referred to the Native Affairs Committee, and honourable members who are on that Committee will have the opportunity of going very carefully through it clause by clause, and of bringing it down to this House, I hope, in a shape that will make it acceptable to the House, and get it through this session. With regard to delay in bringing forward this measure, we are told that the Bill should have been in print months ago, and circulated all over the country. I have no hesitation in saying that since the Bill was put into shape, and translated into the Native language, and sent through the country, those who were most interested in the subject have learned exactly what was going on in this matter; and the very fact of petitions being before this House asking that this legislation should not be carried out shows they do know perfectly well what is going on. I do not recollect in the history of this colony when the Government was called upon to send all the Native legislation they intended to bring down to the House all over the country months beforehand, so that the Natives would know of it. In legislating in this matter any Government, to give effect to the wishes of the House, must know to a certain extent what the views of members are on the subject, to give satisfaction. We could easily bring down a measure which we ourselves approved of, but we have to look at what is practical, and, indeed, fair and reasonable, and for that we have to get the opinions of other members in the House. It is proposed that months before the House meets the Government Bill should be sent all over the country, and that that should be the measure, and nothing but that; and that members of the House representing the people should have no voice in it at all. That is not our wish. We provide what we think will be a favourable measure, and will be likely to go through the House, and ask the House to assist us in getting it through. We do not think it necessary at all that this legislation should be printed months before the House meets, and circulated amongst the Native population. During the whole time I have been in this House, on every occasion that this question of Native-land legislation has come before us, I have always heard the same cry, "Delay this matter for another year, so that the Natives may have an opportunity of considering it." I have no hesitation in saying that, if we delay this measure now for another twelve months, the same cry would be heard next year: "The Natives have not sufficiently considered this matter. You had better put it off for another year." I say the House must tackle the question. One honourable member accused me of using some threat towards the Natives that if they did not accept the Bill they would get something worse. I

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did nothing of the sort. I made no threat whatsoever; but what I said was this: that the time had arrived when the people of New Zealand would not allow seven million acres of land to lie unproductive and useless, and that if the Natives were wise they would take advantage of public opinion and try to get such legislation passed as would be beneficial to themselves, and beneficial to the colony, before the people took the bit in their teeth and determined to deal with it without any further consideration. I had no intention of making any threat towards these Native owners at all. I wished to give them good, friendly advice to take advantage of public opinion, and get legislation passed which will be beneficial to themselves and to the colony. I have no hesitation in saying that if this measure passes and is honestly administered it will prove beneficial to both races.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Friday, 1st September, 1893.

First Readings—Third Readings—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3)—Electoral Bill—Bank-note issue Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Dunedin Garrison Hall Trustees Empowering Bill, Christchurch Hospital Bill, Banks and Bankers Bill.

THIRD READINGS.

Companies Bill, Kaiapoi Borough Council Vesting Bill.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

This Bill was read the first, the second, and the third time.

ELECTORAL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 11.—Persons entitled to be registered.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the words "and, unless his name is already on the roll," in lines 19 and 20, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 22.

Acland	Johnston	Ormond
Barnicoat	Kelly	Pharazyn
Bolt	Mantell	Pollen
Buckley	MacGregor	Stevens
Dignan	McCullough	Stewart
Hart	Montgomery	Whyte
Jenkinson	Oliver	Williams.
Jennings		

NOES, 11.

Bonar	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Kerr	Richardson	Walker, L.
McLean	Shrimski	Whitmore.
Peacock	Swanson	

Majority for, 11.

Words retained.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE moved to add, "Notwithstanding anything in 'The Defence Act, 1886,' contained, it shall be lawful for any officer or member of the Permanent Militia, during the time he shall continue therein, to register as a voter, and to vote for the election of a member of the General Assembly."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be added be so added."

AYES, 17.

Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Peacock	Wahawaha
Grace	Reynolds	Walker, L.
Kelly	Richardson	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Rigg	Whitmore.
Mantell	Shrimski	

NOES, 20.

Acland	Jennings	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	Johnston	Pollen
Bolt	MacGregor	Stevens
Buckley	McCullough	Stewart
Dignan	Montgomery	Whyte
Hart	Oliver	Williams.
Jenkinson	Ormond	

Majority against, 8.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 13.—Names of persons now registered on more than one roll to remain on one roll only.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR moved, That the words "shall be liable to a penalty not exceeding five pounds and," in lines 45 and 46, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Jenkinson	Ormond
Barnicoat	Jennings	Pharazyn
Bolt	Johnston	Pollen
Buckley	MacGregor	Stewart
Dignan	Montgomery	Whyte
Hart	Oliver	Williams.

NOES, 16.

Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Peacock	Wahawaha
Kelly	Reynolds	Walker, L.
Kerr	Richardson	Walker, W. C.
Mantell	Shrimski	Whitmore.
McCullough		

Majority for, 2.

Words retained.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the further consideration of the clause be postponed.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the clause be postponed."

AYES, 18.

Bonar	Mantell	Richardson
Feldwick	McLean	Shrimski
Jennings	Oliver	Swanson
Johnston	Ormond	Walker, L.
Kelly	Peacock	Whitmore
Kerr	Reynolds	Whyte.

NOES, 14.

Acland	Hart	Pollen
Barnicoat	Jenkinson	Stewart
Bolt	MacGregor	Wahawaha
Buckley	Montgomery	Williams.
Dignan	Pharazyn	

Majority for, 4.

Clause postponed.

Clause 42.—Registrar to remove names in case of death, or on request, or for disqualification.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved to insert in line 20, after the word "and," the following words: "shall within one month from the completion of the election expunge from any roll in the district."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 14.

Feldwick	MacGregor	Shrimski
Grace	McLean	Swanson
Jenkinson	Peacock	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Reynolds	Whitmore.
Mantell	Rigg	

NOES, 21.

Acland	Johnston	Pollen
Barnicoat	Kelly	Richardson
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Bonar	Montgomery	Stewart
Buckley	Oliver	Wahawaha
Dignan	Ormond	Whyte
Jennings	Pharazyn	Williams.

Majority against, 7.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 61.—Seamen and commercial travellers to make declaration, and claim for an electoral right.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG moved to strike out the words "commercial traveller," in lines 18 and 19.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 21.

Acland	Johnston	Ormond
Barnicoat	Kerr	Pharazyn
Bolt	MacGregor	Pollen
Bonar	McCullough	Reynolds
Buckley	McLean	Stevens
Dignan	Montgomery	Whyte
Hart	Oliver	Williams.

NOES, 15.

Feldwick	Peacock	Swanson
Jenkinson	Richardson	Wahawaha
Jennings	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kelly	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
Mantell	Stewart	Whitmore.

Majority for, 6.

Words retained.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG moved to insert in line 19, after the word "traveller," the words "or shearer."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 16.

Acland	Kerr	Swanson
Bonar	McLean	Wahawaha
Feldwick	Richardson	Walker, L.
Hart	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Jenkinson	Shrimski.	Whitmore.
Kelly		

NOES, 18.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Pollen
Bolt	Montgomery	Reynolds
Buckley	Oliver	Stevens
Dignan	Ormond	Stewart
Johnston	Peacock	Whyte
MacGregor	Pharazyn	Williams.

Majority against, 2.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved to insert in line 19, after the word "traveller," the words "or harvester."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 15.

Acland	Kerr	Swanson
Bonar	Peacock	Wahawaha
Feldwick	Richardson	Walker, L.
Hart	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Kelly	Shrimski	Whitmore.

NOES, 19.

Barnicoat	McCullough	Pollen
Bolt	McGregor	Reynolds
Buckley	Montgomery	Stevens
Dignan	Oliver	Stewart
Jenkinson	Ormond	Whyte
Jennings	Pharazyn	Williams.
Johnston		

Majority against, 4.

Amendment negatived.

Progress reported.

BANK-NOTE ISSUE BILL.

This Bill was read the first time.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Sir, in asking the Council to pass the second reading of this Bill to-night, I am, I admit, taking a very unusual course; but it is a Bill of a character for which I hope there will be no necessity in future as there has never been in the past. We are following in the lines of legislation in another colony, and legislation of a character which, if it had been adopted

prior to the panic that has there taken place, might have obviated a great deal of trouble. An occasion has arisen for this Bill in the City of Auckland, where what is known as a run has taken place upon what I believe is one of the safest institutions in the country. For some reason or another this run has taken place upon that institution, which, I believe, from the information which the Government have, is perfectly safe, and able not only to pay its debts, but a great deal more. The object of the present Bill is, to a great extent, to obviate any accident that might occur in connection with any other institution. It has been suggested that the bank in question had obligations of a sort which really do not exist, and from all the information which we are able to obtain we find that, although we do nothing to commit the colony in any way, it will be wise to place the banks in such a position as will prevent a run on any of them. The First Part of this Bill is composed of matter of a permanent character, and the Second of a temporary character. The First Part makes the notes a first charge on the assets of the bank—and a proper thing, too; and the Second Part of the Bill gives the Governor power, by Order in Council, to guarantee to a certain extent payment for a certain period of a bank's notes; but, at the same time, the Government and the Governor must be perfectly satisfied that the assets of any such institution are sufficient to relieve the colony from any consequent obligation. These are the provisions of the Bill, which are of a character which will be beneficial to the colony, and which will prevent anything in the nature of a panic such as might be likely to ensue if we do not pass the Bill. I was pleased a few moments ago to see in the other Chamber both sides of the House taking the responsibility for the Bill: that is to say, the leader of the Opposition and the Government both acknowledged the necessity for a measure of this kind. I think I have said sufficient to explain the Bill, and it is unnecessary to offer any further comment. I beg leave now to move, *That the Bill be read the second time.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—I congratulate the Government on having brought this Bill forward. At the same time, I demur to, or complain to a certain extent of, a remark of the honourable gentleman who has just addressed us; because the Auckland Savings-bank is in no way concerned in this Bill. That bank does not issue notes, so this Bill is not to guarantee their notes; and I do not think there was any occasion to have brought up this temporary run on the Auckland Savings-bank as an occasion for this Bill. The fact is that the Government owes the bank money—it is not that the bank owes anybody else anything. The Auckland Savings-bank is a creditor of the Colony of New Zealand to the extent of £125,000, and it has deposits in all the other banks to an extent considerably more than its liabilities. The Auckland Savings-bank is therefore not the occasion of this at all. It is very properly the duty of the Government to

time this action so that no inconvenience, such as occurred in Sydney and Melbourne, may arise. The remainder of the Bill is in accordance with what the Government ought to do in the time of a crisis. This is a sort of indirect protection of savings-banks in the country. The savings-bank of Dunedin and the savings-bank of Hawke's Bay I know are largely in credit, and not many years ago they obtained authority to spend money which they did not know what to do with. That money was spent, and wisely spent, I think, in building suitable offices. That is all I have got to say. The necessity for the Bill is the necessity which existed all over the Australasian Colonies during the time of great difficulty to realise their securities at a short notice. I think the Government have done perfectly right in bringing in this Bill, but I do not want the Auckland bank to be made the occasion of this Bill.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I should just like to say a few words. The Hon. Sir George Whitmore has stated that the Auckland bank owes nothing.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—I said it has no notes.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—And that the Government owes it a large sum of money. Now, it is quite true that the Government owes the bank a large sum of money, because the bank holds Treasury bills of the Government, but these are not immediately realisable. These banks were established, I think, in 1858, and the Government appointed the trustees of each bank, and those trustees appointed vice-presidents. I do not think the Hon. the Attorney-General is paying attention.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I always pay attention to my honourable friend's remarks.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—It does not look like it. I want to give an explanation as to how the matter stands. I say this Bill does not provide for the savings-banks in any way. I am aware that the Auckland Savings-bank, as well as the other savings-banks, has large deposits in other banks, as also other securities; but these are not altogether liquid, and should a run continue on the savings-bank the Government would have to come to the rescue, and pay the depositors their deposit-money. The Government is responsible to the depositors. We had a case in point in the early days—I think, during the first session in Wellington. The savings-bank of the City of Wellington had advanced to the Provincial Government—I am not quite certain of the particulars now, but I think it was somewhere about £20,000. There was a run on the savings-banks, and the Government had to step forward and pay the depositors, and it never got back a penny from the Province of Wellington. Now, supposing the run on the Auckland Savings-bank were to continue, and its liquid funds be exhausted, I hold that, as the colony is responsible to the depositors, the Treasury would have to advance whatever funds might be required; and so with other savings-banks in the

colony. I quite believe these institutions are perfectly sound; and I believe this one is as sound as the Bank of England. I happen to have been for many years a trustee of one of these institutions since the Act was passed, and I can guarantee as to its stability—that there is not the least fear of any loss in Dunedin. I do not for a moment suppose there would be any loss in Auckland. At the same time, if there be a run on this or any other similar bank in the colony, the Treasury will have to find the money and pay the depositors; otherwise the colony will become itself, I may say, a defaulter.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—They will pay it themselves.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—The Hon. Mr. Bonar says they will pay it themselves. Yes, it is all very well, but it may be difficult for them to pay if they have their funds locked up, as most of them have.

The Hon. Mr. BONAR.—We have not got ours locked up.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—Well, that is an exception to the rule. I know they are locked up to a certain extent in Auckland and Dunedin; but there is no doubt that these banks within a very limited period would be able to meet all demands upon them, but while the run continued the savings-banks would have to lean upon the Treasury to meet the calls of the depositors for payment. There is not the least question in my mind that the savings-banks would call upon the colony to pay the depositors.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I have only one or two words to say, Sir. It appears to me that the present occasion is one of the most important that could possibly arise in the history of the colony. It is the first time such a thing has been contemplated since the Constitution Act—namely, to establish a legal tender of notes in the colony. It is not for the purpose of going into the question of the legal tender of notes that I rise. But I have to say that I think this Council would not consent to pass this Bill were it not entirely on the responsibility of the Government. I say this because my honourable friend the Colonial Secretary said, from what he had heard in another place, that such a view was taken of the question that the Opposition side of the House had accepted joint responsibility with the Government upon this important question. Well, Sir, I do not think they can have done so, although they no doubt expressed a proper sympathy with the Government under the difficult circumstances alleged to exist. I repeat that, if a measure of this kind is passed through with such extraordinary expedition, the responsibility must be entirely with the Government of the day. I do not propose to offer any further remarks upon that subject; the Government in charge is responsible for the Bill, and, that being so, I do not intend to say anything further; but I desire to express the hope that this will not be twisted at any future period into an acceptance by the Legislature of the principle of irredeemable currency in

any shape or form. It does not propose to establish an irredeemable currency, but a redeemable guarantee for a limited period. I do hope that it will not be quoted as a precedent, or as giving any colour to the idea that the Legislature had it in its mind at any time that an irredeemable currency should be established.

Bill read the second and the third time.

The Council adjourned at half-past ten o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Friday, 1st September, 1893.

First Readings—Second Reading—Imprest Supply Bill (No. 3)—J. Jervis—E. M. Smith—Lunatics—Dr. MacGregor—Lunatic Asylum Attendants—Appointment of Teachers—Teachers' Salaries—Napier Breakwater—Influx of Criminals—Charitable Aid—Thames and Coromandel Hospitals—Gumfields—Hospitals and Charitable Aid—Police Superannuation—Otorohanga Native Land Court—R. Foster—Christchurch Night Watchman—Native Acts—Lincoln School of Agriculture—Awakino Block—West Coast Settlement Reserves—Sale of Alcoholic Liquor at Sydenham—Waitaki Land—Eketahuna—Alfredton Telephone—Native Land (Validation of Titles) Bill—Cheviot Estate Disposition Bill—Bank-note Issue Bill—Banks and Bankers Bill—Land for Settlements Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READINGS.

Bank-note Issue Bill, Companies Bill.

SECOND READING.

Native Land Court Certificates Confirmation Bill.

IMPREST SUPPLY BILL (No. 3).

This Bill was read a first, a second, and a third time.

J. JERVIS.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had received a letter addressed to himself and to the members of the House of Representatives, respectfully worded, and purporting to be signed by one "John Jervis, Victoria Road, Devonport," wherein it was represented that a certain petition presented on a previous occasion by the honourable member for Waitemata, and purporting to have been signed by the said John Jervis, was not signed by him, but was a forgery. Under the circumstances, he would ask some member of the Government to move that the letter lie on the table, and be referred to the Public Petitions A to L Committee, to whom the petition had been referred, in order that the Committee might inquire into the matter.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE moved, That the letter lie on the table, and be referred to the Public Petitions Committee.

Mr. PALMER was very glad this matter had come up in the House. This man John Jervis had sent a petition, and had sent letters to Mr. Rees, and also to himself, and the petition was

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still before the Petitions Committee. He did not know whether he or Mr. Rees presented it. He had gone to the Speaker with it; and, as it charged some people with forgery, others with conspiracy, others with perjury, and had made charges against the Government, and also against His Excellency the late Governor, he had asked the Speaker whether he ought to present the petition, and had been told that under the circumstances he should do so. The petition had been presented not this year, but last year; but the petitions not dealt with last year were, in accordance with a resolution of the House, brought up this session. He had gone before the Petitions Committee, and told them he knew nothing whatever about it,—that he simply presented the petition, but could give no evidence. They had sent back a letter from the Clerk of the House to John Jervis, of Devonport, Auckland, and the result was, the Speaker had received the communication he had just mentioned. He might say he had a petition purporting to have been signed by J. Jervis, and that the petition set out all the facts he had come to him about, and that it was in accordance with letters and signatures he had seen in his handwriting; so that he actually knew the petition was in Mr. Jervis's handwriting. This man appeared to have acted in a most extraordinary manner, and therefore he would like steps to be taken to see whether the petition was in the handwriting of this man or not. He felt satisfied that it was in his handwriting, and he really could not tell what was the matter with the man, unless he was "a bit strange." That was the only conclusion he could arrive at. The petition was still in the hands of the Committee, and it could be clearly proved whether it was in his handwriting or not.

Mr. SPEAKER said some of the circumstances mentioned by the honourable member had been within his knowledge previously. There was at the present moment in the hands of a member of the House another petition purporting to be signed by the same person. Therefore he thought the better course was to move that the letter be referred to the A to L Committee for inquiry.

Motion agreed to.

Subsequently,

Mr. CADMAN presented a petition from J. Jervis, praying the House to inquire into certain irregularities complained of.

Mr. PALMER would move, That the petition be read, because it was from the person who had been previously referred to, and who had made certain charges against him as a member of the House. In the previous petition he also charged members of a legal firm in Wellington with forgery, and certain other persons with perjury and with stealing land. The previous petition was of so extraordinary a nature that he asked Mr. Speaker whether or not he ought to present it, and Mr. Speaker said he thought that he should do so. The petition was presented, and the Petitions Committee reported that they had no recommendation to make. The Clerk of the House sent him a copy of the decision of the Committee, which he immediately posted to

the petitioner's address at Devonport, Auckland. Papers were then received from the petitioner, in which he charged the Clerk of the House and himself with conspiracy. He thought the letter ought to be read and spoken on: if it were read honourable members would see the extraordinary nature of the allegations which the petition contained, and they would see the absurdity of the whole thing.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said that if the allegations of the honourable member were correct, as he had no doubt they were, the petition could not be received at all, and therefore the time of the House ought not to be taken up by reading it.

Mr. SPEAKER said this petition had nothing whatever to do with the previous petition. The present petition made certain complaints against a certain person who, as the petitioner alleged, was wrongfully allowed to practise the art of a lawyer in the Courts of New Zealand.

Motion negatived.

Mr. PALMER said there was yet another petition which Mr. Speaker had handed to him from the same individual, who stated that no lawyer was to present it. He was therefore retaining it until some one was willing to present it, and he moved, That the petition be laid on the table of the House.

Mr. SPEAKER did not understand the position taken up by the honourable member. It would be irregular to put such a motion, as the petition had not been presented. The honourable gentleman might bring all the documents before the Petitions Committee in connection with the letter which had been referred to it.

E. M. SMITH.

Mr. WILSON brought up a report of the Manufactures and Industries Committee on the petition of Mr. E. M. Smith. The petitioner prayed that the Committee should recommend the Government to grant a subsidy of pound for pound up to £250 for that or any lesser sum subscribed by the public to assist in sending him Home to endeavour to start the iron industry in the colony. The Committee reported that they had no recommendation to make. He moved, That the report do lie upon the table.

Mr. SEDDON moved that the report be referred back. It appeared that owing to pressure of business the honourable member for New Plymouth had not been able to give his evidence before the Committee. As he ought to be enabled to do so, he would move, That the report be referred back, so that the Committee might take the evidence of the petitioner.

Mr. WILSON might explain that it was not that Mr. Smith's evidence should be taken, but that he might be present when the report was brought up, the honourable gentleman being now absent.

Words "do lie on the table" struck out.

The House divided on the question, "That the words 'be referred back to the Committee, in order that Mr. Smith's evidence may be taken,' be inserted."

AYES, 35.

Allen	Hutchison, G.	Pinkerton
Blake	Hutchison, W.	Reeves
Cadman	Joyce	Seddon
Carncross	Kapa	Shera
Carroll	Kelly, W.	Swan
Dawson	McGowan	Tanner
Fish	McGuire	Thompson, T.
Fisher	McKenzie, J.	Ward
Fraser	McLean	Wilson.
Hall-Jones	Meredith	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hamlin	O'Connor	Lawry
Houston	Palmer	Mills, C. H.

NOES, 14.

Buchanan	Harkness	Rolleston
Buckland	Lake	Valentine.
Duthie	Mackenzie, M.	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Mills, J.	Richardson
Hall	Moore	Wright.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Buchanan
Parata	Mackenzie, T.
Smith, E. M.	Rhodes.

Majority for, 21.

Amendment agreed to, and report referred back to the Committee.

LUNATICS.

Mr. FISH asked the Premier,—(1) Whether it is in accordance with the rules of the Lunacy Department to knowingly admit patients under an assumed name; and (2) whether he is aware of any case or cases in which such has been done?

Mr. REEVES said there was no such practice, and there was no such case.

DR. MACGREGOR.

Mr. FISH asked the Premier, Whether it is the intention of the Government to renew the engagement of Dr. MacGregor at the salary of £1,200, which he now receives?

Mr. REEVES said the matter had not yet received the consideration of the Government.

LUNATIC ASYLUM ATTENDANTS.

Mr. FISH asked the Premier, Whether he is aware that, since Dr. MacGregor's appointment as Inspector of Hospitals and Lunatic Asylums, at least five hundred employes in the latter department have either been dismissed or voluntarily left the service, and can he explain why this is so?

Mr. REEVES said it was quite true that a very large number of asylum employes had either voluntarily left the service or been retired or dismissed. But the majority of these left during the first five years. During the last two and a half years about fifty-six persons had been dismissed. Those who left during the first two years of Dr. MacGregor's inspectorship were dispensed with chiefly for this reason: that the three largest establishments of the colony had been completely reorganized from top to bottom, and the dispensing with a large number of assistants and persons em-

ployed was part of the reorganization. With regard to the lower officials of the asylums, they were dismissed, dispensed with, or retired not by the Inspector-General, but by the Medical Superintendents. The Medical Superintendents dispensed with them, and, after dispensing with them, reported to the Inspector-General; and the Inspector-General would have the power, of course, to inquire into any dismissal he did not approve of. Certain dismissals had been effected by the Inspector-General himself. He thought, speaking from memory, some nine or twelve dismissals were stated to have been effected by Dr. MacGregor.

Mr. FISH desired to move the adjournment of the House. He was not able to be present when the departmental estimates in connection with this Lunacy Department were before the House. Had he been, he would then have made the few remarks that he proposed to make on this occasion. He was very glad to hear the reply of the Minister to his first question. He had heard that the contrary was the case, and he was pleased to hear that that was so,—because he assumed that before an answer was given the Minister had made it his duty to inquire into the actual facts. With regard to the second question, relating to the salary of Dr. MacGregor, he was strongly of opinion that £1,200 per annum was far too much for the services he performed to the State. It seemed to be quite an anomaly that a professional man of Dr. MacGregor's standing should be receiving so large a salary as that—£200 in excess of the amount received by the Premier of the country, and larger than that paid to any other Civil servant under the Crown. He thought that, even supposing that gentleman's abilities were greater than he (Mr. Fish) thought they were for the special work he performed, a salary of £1,200 was far too large. He did not wish to say anything particularly harsh against a man who could not reply for himself. He was strongly of opinion that it was not possible that Dr. MacGregor's professional training as a doctor before joining the Government service was sufficient to justify a salary of that magnitude being paid to him, or, indeed, to justify his appointment to the Lunacy Department. He must say that he had never heard that any one else ever understood what Dr. MacGregor's qualifications had been for the particular department over which he presided. Then, with regard to the third question, about the number of dismissals which had taken place during Dr. MacGregor's term of office, although the Minister had stated that a number had been made by the doctors in charge of the asylums, still they could not be made without the sanction, and possibly the previous instructions, of the Inspector himself; and he (Mr. Fish) was free to confess his belief that a large number of the dismissals and voluntary retirements from the service only arose from one reason, and that was on account of the tyrannical and overbearing management by Dr. MacGregor of these institutions. A case had recently come under his notice, and it fully bore out the state-

ment as to the harsh, tyrannical, and overbearing manner of this gentleman, and also what he thought he might be justified in terming the unfairness with which he treated the persons under him in these public institutions. The case to which he was about to refer seemed to him to be about as unjust as one as could possibly occur, and it showed him, further, that Dr. MacGregor must be subject to very sudden changes of opinion with regard to Civil servants. Now, he (Mr. Fish) thought that a Civil servant who received what was practically a dismissal, or who was compelled to resign at the mandate or dictation of the chief official of the department, had the same right as every one had of being heard in his own defence. Any Civil servant who was dispensed with—as he understood the regulations—had the right to demand an inquiry, and that inquiry was in all cases, without distinction, granted to the person so dispensed with. He was alluding to the case of Miss Finch, who was, until recently, Matron of the Wellington Asylum—Mount View, he thought it was called. This lady had all of a sudden incurred the displeasure of Dr. MacGregor. He understood she was egged on, or forced on, by his treatment of her, and by the remarks he made about her management, to send in her resignation of her position of Matron of that institution. After she had tendered it, acting, possibly, under the hasty impulse of a woman, her friends pointed out to her that she had done wrong, and requested her, in her own interests, to withdraw her resignation. She did so. That request was summarily and, as he understood, most discourteously refused by Dr. MacGregor; and, in reply to the request to be permitted to withdraw her resignation, she was discourteously informed, not only that she could not be allowed to withdraw her resignation, but that actually the position she occupied had been filled up; and the time between the tendering of the resignation and filling-up of the vacancy was so short as to lead many persons to the inevitable conclusion that the office had been marked out for somebody beforehand, who was ready to be pitchforked into it immediately this unfortunate young lady was induced to tender her resignation. To show the extraordinary action, as he thought it was, of Dr. MacGregor with regard to this young lady,—whom, he might say, he did not know and had never seen, to the best of his knowledge,—he would just read one or two extracts from reports, which would show, at any rate, that a very sudden change of opinion had taken place in Dr. MacGregor's mind, and went to prove one of two things: either that that gentleman was capable of coming to very hasty and immature conclusions, or was actuated in this case by something more than a legitimate zeal for the general interests of the Service of the colony, and of his department in particular. He would say, before going further, that he did not intend to discuss this case at any length, for this reason: that he believed further correspondence was now taking place between this young lady's legal advisers and the department,

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in order to obtain an inquiry, and, failing that,—and it seemed to him it was a foregone conclusion that it would be a failure—the young lady would petition the House. He only desired to point out what he deemed an extraordinary inconsistency on the part of the gentleman to whom he referred. On the 1st August, 1889, Dr. MacGregor made an entry in the Inspector's book—which was kept by virtue of a section of the Act of 1882—in which he stated, "Miss Finch promises to be a most satisfactory Matron." Then, on the 21st February, 1891, the Inspector made an entry—which was included in his report dated the 1st April, 1891—in these words: "Especially I noticed an improvement on the female side. Notwithstanding that the Matron was absent on leave, everything was going on satisfactorily." In the latter part of the year 1892 he stated that he intended to have her salary raised owing to the manner in which she performed her duty. On the 26th October, 1891, he made an entry—which was included in his report of the 1st April, 1892—in which he pointed out the difficulties which had to be contended with on the female side on account of overcrowding, there being over 25 per cent. more patients than there was accommodation for. In the entry the Inspector said, "Considering the great difficulties the Matron and her staff had to contend with, it"—the female side—"is very creditable to her." Then, he (Mr. Fish) understood it was a fact that, in various conversations, at various times, and especially with a gentleman who was on a professional visit to Wellington in 1891, Dr. MacGregor spoke highly of the manner in which Miss Finch performed her duties, and of her capacity. These were facts which were in print, and could not, he apprehended, be denied; and therefore it appeared to him, on the face of it, that the department had acted in a most arbitrary manner in refusing, in the first place, to allow the young lady to withdraw her resignation, and, secondly, in a more arbitrary manner still in refusing to grant her an inquiry, which was the common right, and was given to every member of the Civil Service, as he understood, from the lowest to the highest. There was something wrong somewhere, and he could not help saying that, so far as he knew the facts, it appeared to him that this young lady had been very unjustly treated. However, there might be another side to the question, and it might be possible that Dr. MacGregor could justify his conduct with regard to her; but, if that were the case, it appeared to him the department, Dr. MacGregor, and the Minister should have hailed with delight the application of this young lady for an inquiry into her case; and he thought the House would be unanimous in saying that such an inquiry should be granted, as a matter of justice. He had opposed that gentleman's salary in the House on more occasions than one, and had expressed the conviction that he held, from no feeling of personal hostility to the gentleman referred to, that that gentleman was not the right man in the right place. He had never

been able to see that so important a department as that of Lunacy and Hospitals would be safe under the control of Dr. MacGregor. So far as his (Mr. Fish's) knowledge was concerned, that gentleman had never, since his appointment to that important position, advocated a reform of any kind. He believed it was on record that during one visit to Dunedin he had suggested to the authorities that they might make an improvement in some ventilator or valve in connection with the Benevolent Asylum at that place. But, apart from that, in no part of the colony had he made any suggestion of reform or improvement in the great department he had under his charge. He need hardly say more than this; that for the control of institutions of the kind which Dr. MacGregor had under his charge it was absolutely essential beyond all things that the right man should be in the right place; and if it could be shown, as he thought it could easily be shown, with regard to his general management that he was systematically fiery and overbearing to those under him, and subject to spasmodic fits of vacillation with regard to the merits or demerits of persons under his control, it proved more distinctly than anything else that a gentleman such as that should not be intrusted with these large powers. There was another very strong impression on his mind, that Dr. MacGregor had too much command over his department. He understood that in times gone by, when the department was under the control of Mr. Cooper as Under-Secretary, that gentleman acted as a connecting-link between the Inspector of Asylums and the Minister; but he was informed that the circumstances were altered, and that the gentleman who now occupied Mr. Cooper's position did not attempt in any way to interfere with the management of these important institutions which were controlled by Dr. MacGregor; and, with the greatest respect to the Minister, he (Mr. Fish) was inclined to think it was Dr. MacGregor who wagged that gentleman's tail rather than himself. He did not say this at all offensively to the Minister, and he hoped he would not take it so, but he believed the whole and sole control of the institutions was under that gentleman; and, if that were so, it was the more necessary that he should be a person with thorough control over himself, one in whom all motives and actions should be controlled to the greatest extent by a sense of justice and propriety. He would not say more upon the case of Miss Finch, for the reason he had already stated; but he felt it to be his duty as a member of the House not merely to put the questions on the Paper, but to speak in the manner he had done; and he trusted that in what he had said he had not said a word that had failed to satisfy the courtesies of life and those of a member of Parliament. He had been impressed with the importance of the institutions controlled by Dr. MacGregor, and that had induced him to bring the matter forward, in the hope that the attention of the House and the country would be attracted to his remarks; but, more than all that, the Minister himself would be

able to say something, personally, which would entirely disperse the mists and cobwebs which his remarks had been calculated to create.

Mr. McLEAN would not detain the House a moment, but desired to say that he had nothing to say with regard to the management of Dr. MacGregor, nor as to the question of his salary, or the other matters touched upon by the honourable member for Dunedin City; but he had a very strong feeling and conviction that these institutions were not managed on the best or most scientific principles. If the Minister did not do something in the matter during the recess he (Mr. McLean) would promise him that, if he came back to the House, he would do the best he could to have some alteration made in the system of treatment of those poor people who, from various causes, found their way into those institutions.

Mr. PINKERTON regretted somewhat that the question had been brought forward on a motion for adjournment of the House. He had reason to believe that a petition was being prepared for presentation to the House dealing with what the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) had spoken of, and, if that were so, it would be better to delay any debate on the subject.

Mr. REEVES thought it would be better for him to say a few words. First of all, with regard to the question of dismissal, honourable members must remember that the staff in the employ of the Lunacy Department was a large one—nearly two hundred and fifty persons. It was quite true that five hundred changes in seven and a half years was a large number even with so large a staff. But it must also be remembered that many had left owing to voluntary causes. It was also to be remembered that special qualifications were required in connection with the service in lunatic asylums, and that, for obvious reasons, the discipline was very strict. It frequently happened that men or women entered the service of the department, and, after a short time, found that they were not specially fitted for the service, and of their own accord they resigned. It also happened that attendants were not dismissed at all, but paid off and dispensed with for good and sufficient reasons; they might be too old, or unfitted in various ways for the work, and a great many changes were accounted for in that way. He thought honourable members would agree that in such a peculiar department as this it was absolutely necessary that there should be the strictest discipline observed, and that the staff should be weeded out from time to time. Now, as to the case of Miss Finch, he would not go into that at the present time. The honourable gentleman had stated, quite correctly, that if she and her legal advisers felt aggrieved they had the course open to them of petitioning the House. The department had no wish to burke a petition to the House, or say one word against it. If the young lady and her advisers liked to petition let them petition, and the department would be ready to meet them. He had no fear, speaking as the head of the

department, but that the course taken by his officer would be fully vindicated by Parliament if the case came before it. He would just say that Dr. MacGregor was quite satisfied that Miss Finch, though an excellent lady, was neither physically nor by temperament fitted for the peculiar position of Matron of a lunatic asylum. He was quite satisfied that she ought never to have been appointed, and, after a lengthy and very kindly trial, it was found desirable that some one else should be appointed in her place. It was not the case that she first resigned and then was not allowed to withdraw her resignation; but she resigned and did withdraw it, and her services were afterwards dispensed with under the Act of 1886; and under such circumstances she had no right to an inquiry. He wished to say, with regard to these perpetual outcries for inquiries of all kinds—ranging from investigations by an officer of the Service to Royal Commissions—he thought the time had come when this system should be put a stop to. A Minister was responsible to Parliament and the country for the management of his department with the assistance of his officers, and, if he could not manage it with his officers, then he and they ought not to be there. Parliament should get rid of them, and, except under exceptional and peculiar circumstances, he did not think these Royal Commissions or special inquiries should be authorised. In this case there was no cause for inquiry, much less for a Royal Commission. Lastly, as to Dr. MacGregor, the honourable gentleman somewhat strongly dwelt upon him as an officer and a man. He described that gentleman as a man of arbitrary and tyrannical disposition, subject to tempestuous gusts of passion and feeling—subject to fits, he thought the honourable gentleman said.

Mr. FISH.—No, not fits.

Mr. REEVES said the only fits he was subject to were those from honourable gentlemen in that House, who were not always so careful in their accusations as they ought to be. But, having had some experience of Dr. MacGregor as an officer, he would say—and he was glad to have the opportunity of saying it—he had never seen a Civil servant of whom he had a higher opinion than he had of him. It was not a mere question of ability, of which he had plenty, but as an officer he (Mr. Reeves) believed there was no more enthusiastic, skilful, or devoted public servant in the service of the colony. When the time came for the consideration of Dr. MacGregor's engagement and position, if he (Mr. Reeves) were to have a voice in it, he would say that Dr. MacGregor should be re-engaged, and at no less a salary than he now received.

Mr. TAYLOR said he could not agree with the doctrine just laid down by the Minister in charge of this department. They knew it was desirable, as a rule, that the Minister should have some control of his department, and he took it that the Minister should take individual interest in his department occasionally. With regard to his remark that they had no right to

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make inquiries when an honourable member made a statement, he could not conceive that to be the position.

Mr. REEVES.—Nothing of the kind was said.

Mr. TAYLOR said, then he could not understand plain English; but he could, at any rate, understand the common vernacular. Any one listening to the remarks made by the Minister would entirely agree with him (Mr. Taylor) that it was very undesirable to say that there should be no inquiry if members of the House thought proper that there should be one. He was not going to say a word against Dr. MacGregor on this occasion, because the question under consideration was not the departmental administration of the Lunacy Department; it was only one peculiar part of it—the dismissal of some attendant or other. Members had no greater duty than to get up in their places and protect some two thousand unfortunate people who were confined in these asylums, and who had no mode of expressing their views on the question. He trusted the Minister would be considerate. As he (the Minister) had spoken, he should allow other members to speak also if they thought proper so to do. He was not going to say anything about the general management of the department, as he would have an opportunity of dealing with that at another time; but he hoped the discussion that day would have a beneficial effect on the management of the department.

Mr. HOGG thought the whole history of these lunatic asylums had been a history from time to time of grievous abuse and very great injustice. He also dissented, with the last speaker, from the remarks made by the Minister in replying, to the effect that these inquiries should not be granted. He maintained that, if there were serious abuses, they ought to be exhibited in the light of day, and have the fullest inquiry made into them. He had only to say that, even if occasional inquiries occurred where no inquiry was necessary, these inquiries should be made, if only with the view of keeping these institutions in a wholesome condition. Inquiries from time to time were absolutely necessary, and he certainly would not for a moment admit the doctrine that, where abuses were calculated to spring up, there should be no inquiry. In connection with the asylums attached to the City of Wellington there had been abuses of a most grave, most flagrant, and fearful description. Within recent years they knew that inmates of these asylums had been subjected to the most inhuman treatment, and he would like to know whether no inquiry was necessary. They knew, in regard to some recent inquiries, that they had been resultless; but the general opinion, he believed, of the public—and it was his opinion in the matter also—was that these inquiries had been simply farcical, and had not been conducted in the spirit in which they should have been conducted. There was another thing in regard to these asylums which had become a very serious item. On referring to the estimates before them, he saw

the amount to be appropriated this year for salaries was £21,000 for lunatic asylums alone; and on reference to the same estimates he found that the total amount for fees, medical witnesses, rations, fuel and lighting, bedding, clothing, surgery and dispensary, wines, spirits, and all other expenses in connection with the same institutions—the net cost—was £21,560. Here they had public institutions in which for salaries alone the expenditure was equal to the total amount paid for the maintenance of the inmates, inclusive of surgery, dispensary, fuel, light, and everything. That was a matter that demanded inquiry, and he hoped the Minister would make inquiry into it. He thought the amount expended in salaries was something enormous. But he was not surprised that the amount was so large, considering that the gentleman at the head of affairs received £1,200 per annum. He (Mr. Hogg) did not say this gentleman was not perhaps the best officer that could possibly be selected—a gentleman whose education reflected the highest credit upon the appointment that had been made—a gentleman well adapted for the position he occupied—he did not deny that for a moment; but, at the same time, he said, when they considered that the salary he received annually, irrespective of his travelling-allowances, represented the cost of the maintenance of two well-equipped country hospitals, it was altogether too much for one man. Whatever might be the opinion of honourable members in the House, whatever might be the opinion of Ministers on this subject, he maintained that £1,200 for a gentleman occupying the position in question was more than a colony like this ought to be called upon to spend. While on this subject, he would like to make a few remarks as to charitable aid generally, and especially to the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act. It was notorious that that Act had proved a wretched failure. The facts and figures showed that most conclusively. These facts and figures showed that the Act, so far from doing good since it had been put in operation, had offered a gratuity to the wildest improvidence. It had produced widespread wife-desertion in the country. It had also brought about parental negligence, and, he believed, it had been productive of gross immorality. He did not know whether an Act of that kind should be tolerated. He thought, there was very great room for reform. The operation of the measure was destructive of thrift, it produced professional pauperism, and, while it had fostered pauperism, the deserving poor had been neglected. He did not deny for a moment that from time to time there were pitiable cases of poverty cropping up, especially in large centres; but, on the other hand, alongside those cases they had the grossest imposition practised. Now, under the Act the unthrift, the ne'er-do-well, in every community possessed a recognised claim upon the revenue of the colony—they must and would be supported. And what did that mean? It simply meant that the thrifty were saddled with the family responsibilities of the

dissolute, the immoral, and the improvident. A few years ago, during the Kimberley rush—not to travel very far from Wellington, in his own district—they had cases of men who deserted their families, and went away to the rush, casting their family responsibilities completely behind them, without the slightest consideration for the interests of their wives and children, who, consequently, became a burden upon the general public; and it was owing to the operation of this Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act that this state of things existed. As regarded the amelioration of the sufferings of the poor, he said that no Act could possibly be a greater failure. Suffering had not been reduced, but under this Act it had been increased, and he would point out how. In the first place, the Act had imposed very heavy taxation upon the poor. In the opinion of the author of the Act, the poor in the country were disposed to gravitate to the centres; but, on the other hand, the improvident, when they were hard pushed in the centres, radiated towards the country, and that was why they found so many men travelling about with swags on their backs. The author of the Act, no doubt animated by the very best of motives, pictured the country population as an assemblage of squatters rolling in wealth, with unlimited funds at their command, and unwilling to find labour or to assist the poor. But they had another class of taxpayers in the country—a very numerous class: he referred to the small settlers. These were very heavily taxed. It took as much as ever they could do, struggling from morning till night, to find means to pay their taxes, pay their way, and feed and clothe their families. Upon this portion of the poor the Act was a very serious infliction indeed: it had imposed a most cruel tax. In the Charitable Aid Board in Wellington they had the members divided amongst themselves, and so disgusted were they that they were prepared to abnegate their functions; and he was not surprised at it. Let them look at the figures. Wellington and the country districts, with regard to charitable aid, were lumped together; and the result was this: Wairarapa North County—one little county, let them remember—during the year 1890–91 contributed, subsidy included, no less a sum than £1,051 to the United Charitable Aid Board; and out of this sum of over £1,000 it received back £350. Wairarapa South County in the same year contributed £1,085, and out of that large amount it had received back £90 towards the support of its own poor. The Borough of Masterton—a comparatively small borough, with very slender resources, containing a larger number of poor ratepayers—had contributed £249, and out of that had received nothing. In the year 1892–93 he found that the two counties contributed £3,280, and received back £650, the balance of £2,580 going to the City of Wellington. As long as this Act continued to operate, a sum of from £2,000 to £3,000 would be exacted from the unfortunate struggling settlers in the country, who were striving to make homes for themselves, and to

Mr. Hogg

whom every shilling was of the utmost importance at the present moment. This large sum of between £2,000 and £3,000 was exacted annually, and carried down to Wellington to foster a system of downright pauperism. The country people had resisted this by legal process, because they looked upon it as blackmail: and it was nothing else. The Act had had the effect of drying up the well-springs of benevolence; and it had this very bad effect: It took from the contributor in the country all control over the expenditure. Nothing more monstrous could possibly be contemplated than to levy a tax of this unjust character on the country population, and give them no control over it whatever. They had no control over the expenditure of the money. No doubt they had control over the £200 or £300 which they expended themselves on the poor of their own district, but that was comparatively an insignificant amount. He would like to point out to Ministers and to honourable members that in the country districts this Act was having a very bad effect, because it was leading to a system of extravagance. Demands for the maintenance not of the poor, but of the improvident, were continually increasing, and the representatives of the benevolent institutions in the country, seeing that they really had no control over the heavy taxes that were exacted from the ratepayers, did not pay the same attention to economy as they did in former years. The Act had had the effect, in the first place, of stifling private benevolence, and, in the second place, it had the effect of doing away with a proper system of economy. It had prevented cases of destitution brought before those members from being inquired into as they should have been. A great deal more could be said with regard to the pernicious effect of the legislation that had been unfortunately introduced, and he hoped the Minister would deal with the question, for it was really a question which demanded immediate attention. He was speaking on behalf of his constituents, and of the country in general, for he had no doubt that the same state of affairs existed in other parts of New Zealand. He was only reiterating the views of hundreds of settlers when he said that it was time there should be an alteration of the law. The country people had now no benefit from the money which they were compelled to contribute. It was a most serious matter, affecting the country population generally. It was not a question between country and town, because he believed this evil was doing as much injury to large centres as to the people in the country. He was glad to find that the Inspector of this department had called attention to the fact that some remedy was needed, and that something should be done to stop this heavy expenditure on charitable aid, which amounted to something like £150,000. It amounted to nearly one-half of the total expenditure on education, and it was far too much. He maintained that under our present system, under the statute in existence, so far from remedying distress where there was really distress in the colony, they were fostering the

growth of a pauper population. They were creating poor people, instead of trying to alleviate their sufferings. He was speaking on behalf of the poor settlers, many of whom were in a worse position than those to whom charitable aid was doled out from time to time. The matter had been brought before the Minister year after year, and he trusted that before the present year passed some attempt would be made to alter the state of things.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON was not going to say one word about the particular cases referred to. He must, however, say that he thought the Minister of Justice was very unfortunate in the remarks he made. In the first place, the honourable gentleman deprecated inquiry generally. But he (Mr. Hutchison) would ask, how were these institutions to be maintained at all if they were not kept in touch with the public? Unfortunately, in the district he came from the asylum was placed entirely away from the population. A most unfortunate selection of a site had been made. It was entirely removed from the influence of public opinion of any sort, and, unless inquiry was made into its working frequently, it would not be possible to maintain it at all. Not only so, but the way in which inquiries were made at present was not at all satisfactory. One or two sessions ago he had made a suggestion to the Minister that there should be five or six individuals appointed to officially visit the Asylum from time to time. There were, it is true, the Inspector and the Sub-Inspector, two interested officers; but in addition to them they should have five or six more, and he ventured to suggest that some of those should be selected from the working-classes, so that the whole community might know that their interests were cared for. With regard to an inquiry that had been held recently, the evidence taken at which was laid on the table the other day, that inquiry was conducted by Dr. MacGregor in the most official way possible. There was no one else present but Dr. MacGregor, the doctor of the Asylum, and one or two subordinate officials; and the defendants came before their judge or judges one by one. Supposing there had been two or three individuals there of an unbiassed character, assisting at that inquiry, it would have had a different aspect to the public altogether. It came to the employees simply as an inquiry held by Dr. MacGregor alone, and therefore it could not be a satisfactory inquiry. He might mention that the doctor was a personal friend of his, and he could say with confidence that the doctor was a most able and conscientious officer; but he must add that an inquiry held by him in the presence only of Dr. Truby King was not such as would carry with it the confidence of the community. There ought to be persons representing all classes of the community present at inquiries of that sort. With regard to an inquiry which turned upon the sort of food that the servants were to eat, that might seem an absurd thing to inquire into, but the doctor forgot that it called up the whole question of the adminis-

tration of the Medical Superintendent. He ventured again to suggest to the Minister that it would be well, in the interests of those institutions and of the inmates, that he should appoint half a dozen persons—some of them working-men—as Official Visitors, from Dunedin and the surrounding districts, who could make periodical visits. There were a large number of unfortunate people at Seacliff, who were cut off from all contact with the public, and unless the public were kept constantly in touch with that institution there must be a feeling of insecurity about it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—It is the same here.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said it was quite a different thing in Wellington, as the asylum was quite close to the town; and if the asylum at Seacliff were in the immediate vicinity of Dunedin it would also be different. And this was not a thing to be put off from month to month. He had had no intention of speaking on this occasion, but the remarks of the Minister led him to say a few words. Then, that honourable gentleman was pleased to say that he would be quite prepared to maintain the Inspector's salary at £1,200 when opportunity occurred. He (Mr. Hutchison) would say, publicly, that that was far too high a salary. Dr. MacGregor knew his views regarding it. He thought it should be half that and no more.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Oh, oh!

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said he heard somebody say, "Oh!" Well, he thought that sum was quite sufficient to pay that officer. He knew that Dr. MacGregor was a most capable and able officer, and probably as suited for the position as any who could be selected. In conclusion, he would express a hope that the Minister would not seek to prevent inquiries, for he might rest assured they must be made, more especially in connection with the Seacliff Asylum.

Mr. REEVES rose to make a personal explanation. It was only right that the words used by him should be emphasized, but he thought there should not be a meaning attached to them which they would not fairly bear. He deprecated special inquiry in the absence of special or unusual circumstances: that was all. He frankly admitted that where anything special or unusual had occurred in connection with the Lunacy Department there ought to be a special inquiry, and he had more than once authorised a special inquiry. He might say, for the information of the House and of the public,—for he did not think a false impression should be allowed to go abroad,—that there were already regular Visitors to the Seacliff Asylum. There were Messrs. Maitland and Chapman, and the Hon. George McLean.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON said that did not at all carry out the view he had placed before the Minister. He had spoken of a different class of people altogether as Visitors.

Mr. WILLIS quite agreed that there ought to be more inquiries. He would quote the case of the Wanganui Hospital as a case in point. Of course, as far as Wanganui was concerned,

it might, perhaps, be looked upon as a matter past and gone. He could only say this: that at the time that inquiry was asked for in Wanganui there was some disposition to burke it on the part of the very people who should be most anxious to have inquiries—namely, the Hospital authorities. He did not wish to go into the painful circumstances in connection with the Wanganui case again, but he thought that, where it was necessary that an inquiry should be held, every facility should be given for that purpose; and they should not be content with a report simply stating that the case did not require to be proceeded with any further, especially when there was a strong feeling that the case should be proceeded with. He thought that whenever an inquiry into any case had been burked it had had a bad effect.

Mr. O'CONOR said the way in which that debate had been introduced was one which was becoming an every-day occurrence, and it led to very great waste of time. He thought the subject very unpleasant, and somewhat painful. A discussion of a personal character such as this should not be thus introduced. Now, the honourable member for Dunedin City had brought this matter forward in the shape of two questions, in his endeavour to make a case against a valuable officer in the Government service, holding a high position. Well, he would say to that honourable gentleman that he did not think it was a manly course, or a proper course, that any member of the House should make use of the privileges of the House for the purpose of making an *ex parte* statement against any individual who was not there to defend himself. The honourable gentleman, in his speech, assured the House that he had no hostile feeling; but everybody must feel that he was not only hostile to the individual in question, but that he was hitting at somebody else.

Mr. FISH.—Oh, I see!

Mr. O'CONOR said the honourable gentleman thought nobody would see but himself. It was unfortunate for the chief officer of the lunatic asylums in this colony that he was related to a member of that House who came from the same locality as the honourable member for Dunedin City, and who did not agree with him. Well, if the honourable member for Dunedin City had taken a proper amount of care against mixing up any personal matters of this kind he would have avoided taking a discussion of this kind upon his hands; but it seemed congenial to that honourable gentleman: he seemed to like it—the more vile the better. The answer he got from Ministers seemed to him (Mr. O'Conor) to be a perfectly satisfactory one. It was absurd to talk of this gentleman's office and the salary attaching to it at this present time, because the country was under an agreement for a certain length of time at a certain amount of salary for his services. When the time came to review that engagement and salary, then it would be a question for the Government to decide whether the engagement and salary should be renewed

Mr. Willis

or not. It was sufficient for honourable members now to know that under three successive Governments that officer had served the country faithfully; and that fact, he (Mr. O'Conor) thought, ought to protect him from these attacks. The honourable member for Dunedin City ought not to have brought this trumped-up charge against Dr. MacGregor because of the dismissal of this girl. It was an easy matter for an honourable member to trump up a charge against an officer in the public service, but in doing it the honourable member for Dunedin City had shown his animus. He (Mr. O'Conor) objected to any member making personal observations of the kind the honourable member for Dunedin City was in the habit of making in the House. He regretted very much that what was called disorderly with regard to members inside the House was not called disorderly when applied to persons outside the House. He believed the whole of this discussion was subversive of order. If a member interrupted another, he disturbed the business of the House and was out of order; but when business was introduced in an irregular way, that was breaking up the whole order of business and sacrificing the time of the House. Although honourable members had gone into the merits of the charitable-aid question, it must have been noticeable that a number of members vacated the chamber as soon as this matter was brought under discussion. It would be seen from this action on their part that very many honourable members disapproved of the action of the honourable member for Dunedin City.

Mr. FISH.—Hear, hear.

Mr. O'CONOR said the honourable member said, "Hear, hear." It was no doubt a source of gratification to that honourable gentleman to use the kind of language he did. He seemed to have a perfect flood of it. He seemed to have a talent in that way, and it was a most unfortunate thing for him that he had. If he had not that talent he would be of much more use to society, and if, having that talent, he did not exercise it so often he would be held in greater respect by members of the House. Now, he gave the honourable gentleman a fair chance of giving him a return for the compliments he had paid, and for the kindly advice he had given, and of turning his wrath upon him. He was quite welcome to do so, but one thing was certain—the honourable gentleman knew perfectly well he (Mr. O'Conor) could pay back.

Captain RUSSELL said the honourable gentleman who had just sat down had spoken so much in a direction that he himself was about to pursue that it was almost unnecessary he should speak at all. It was with extreme regret he found the forms of the House had again been availed of to discuss what now appeared to be an abstract question. The honourable member for Dunedin City moved the adjournment of the House, and went on to refer to the dismissal of some nurse in a lunatic asylum. Of course, as he (Captain Russell) was

not present in the chamber, he did not know what happened. He was more or less cognizant of the fact that a Matron had been dismissed, and that the honourable member for Dunedin City had spoken on that subject; but as he (Captain Russell) did not know the arguments he used, it was not necessary that he should attempt to follow what he had not heard. But there had been two or three statements made in the debate which, to his mind, required an answer. It had been stated that half the salary paid to the present Inspector of Lunatic Asylums would be sufficient. He was entirely at issue on that point. It had been alleged that it was the duty of the country—and that such was the case went without saying—to see that the lunatic asylums of the colony were carefully supervised. It had been suggested by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison) that they should appoint six visiting gentlemen, some of whom should come from the labouring-classes, to be inspectors of these lunatic asylums. Did anybody imagine for an instant that anybody without special knowledge of the subject could do much good by merely visiting the lunatic asylums? On the contrary, any one of them who had visited the asylums had been struck, on every occasion, with the extreme orderliness and wonderful control in which the patients were held by those in charge of them, and the apparent good-feeling, at any rate, which existed between the patients and those in charge of them. He must say that, on occasions when he had visited lunatic asylums, he had been filled with admiration of the kindly feeling maintained in those institutions amongst the patients and their guardians. Then, was it to be supposed that they were competent to examine and inquire into the management of these asylums by simply casual visits? Of course it could not be the case. Was it possible they could arrive at any conclusion worth having by a cursory examination of the kind suggested? That was not the way to examine the management of lunatic asylums. While upon the same point, he would remind honourable members that the official upon whom must primarily rest—and not only primarily but almost entirely rest—the efficient conduct of their asylums was the Inspector-General. Then, they might settle, if they chose, whether the gentleman who filled that position was a suitable person. It was absurd to suppose that they could settle the question of suitability by such a discussion as that which had taken place that afternoon. If an inquiry into that subject was necessary, it should be gone into carefully, and they should see whether he was a fit and suitable person. But they must not imagine that they were going to get a fit and suitable person at £600 a year. For a position of this kind they must have a gentleman of the highest capacity, and whether that involved an expenditure of £600 or £6,000 he did not care twopence. Their duty was to see that they had a first-class man. During the time the gentleman who now held the position had filled it, had it been alleged, had it been proved in any way that he was

other than highly qualified for it? He should have liked a debate of this kind to have been given due notice of, so that honourable members could have come prepared to discuss generally the management of the lunatic asylums. He might say that he had had the honour, during eighteen months, to be connected through his department with the management of the asylums; and he could say that, at any rate, he had been greatly impressed with the untiring energy of the officials who were connected with the lunatic asylums, and every one of the persons employed in those institutions placed the utmost confidence and respect in the Inspector-General. It was of no use, for the purpose of this discussion, to say whether he (Captain Russell) did or did not; but he had much pleasure in saying—of course he did not profess to have any expert knowledge on the subject—that he was very much pleased with the management of those institutions by the Inspector-General. The House should not run away for one moment with the idea that by reducing the salary of such an important officer as this they would protect the rights of the poor lunatics. If there was any demand, any real and proper demand for inquiry into the management of any asylum, by all means let it be granted; but let that demand be properly formulated. They should not have it brought up as this discussion was introduced, but the Minister should be instructed as to the cause for the inquiry, and then a proper Commission should be appointed—not of men who knew nothing of the subject, but of men who were properly qualified to inquire into the matter; and he presumed no Minister or member of that House would be likely to oppose the appointment of such a Commission. But to say that any human institution was perfect was absurd. That the asylums of this colony bore favourable comparison with the asylums of any colony of Australasia he firmly believed. It had been his duty to read the reports on lunatic asylums in the neighbouring colonies; he had taken more or less an interest in the matter; and without a shadow of a doubt, and with every sense of the responsibility that was on him, he could say that the asylums in this colony were thoroughly and properly managed as compared with the institutions in the other colonies of Australasia. They should not attempt in that House to condemn the administration of any officer before full and competent inquiry had been made into that administration. If the administration was bad, he should not object to its being thoroughly inquired into. He did not believe that such had been the case, but if others held a different opinion they should assist in getting a properly-appointed Commission to inquire into it. But in his opinion they ought not to debate, in the manner they were doing that afternoon, the conduct of an officer who held such a high position.

Mr. MEREDITH thought the honourable member for Dunedin City, who had provoked so much discussion and occupied so much time of the House that afternoon, had acted

somewhat prematurely in bringing forward the matter at this stage. He thought it would have been better to have allowed the matter to remain in abeyance until such time as the petition he had indicated would be presented on behalf of some aggrieved lady who was formerly connected with the Seaclyff Asylum. Members of that House had a right to visit public institutions, and he thought it was the duty of honourable members to avail themselves of that right and visit these institutions before they stood up and preferred charges against public officers upon mere hearsay. He did not pretend to know much about, it or about the professional qualifications of Dr. MacGregor, who was now at the head of this department. But he would say this: that, having heard certain reports for and against the management of the lunatic asylums in the colony, he thought it his duty to suspend his judgment until he saw for himself. During last session he visited the lunatic asylums at Wellington and Porirua. He gave no intimation to the officials that he intended to visit them. He went by a morning train to Porirua, and had the good fortune to meet Dr. Fooks on the spot. He spent several hours in looking over the institution and observing the treatment of the patients, and he came to the conclusion that the institution was under careful management. He subsequently visited the Wellington Lunatic Asylum, and looked over the management of that institution, both externally and internally. He observed the treatment pursued by those in charge of the inmates, and he came to this conclusion: that the management of both institutions reflected the highest possible credit on the gentleman at the head of the lunatic asylums of the colony. He had not gone into the question of the salary of Dr. MacGregor, and whether it should be reduced or otherwise, and therefore he was incompetent to express an opinion. But he thought it was the duty of honourable members to make themselves acquainted with the management of their public institutions before they stood up on the floor of that House and made statements that were not borne out by facts.

Mr. FERGUS said he did not intend to discuss this question at all at any length, but he must defend the right of the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) to bring it forward. And, more than that, he thought the head of the department was only too glad it was brought forward, because there was no doubt a great deal of capital had been made and was now being made out of the one case connected with this question here—he referred to the case of Miss Finch; and from the *ex parte* statements he had heard he was inclined to believe something had been gravely wrong in the case, and it was far better that they should get this out at once than keep it simmering. However, seeing that Miss Finch was about to petition the House and bring her grievance before Parliament, he thought it would be unwise to discuss the matter at great length on the present occasion.

Mr. Meredith

What he wished to say now, however, was that he dissented entirely from the doctrine laid down by another honourable member for Dunedin City, that they should appoint half a dozen nobodies to go out and interfere with the management of the various lunatic asylums throughout the country. To do this would be to lessen the responsibilities of the officers in charge, who, he thought, were rightly held responsible for the management of the institutions under their care. He did not think that in the past these Visitors had proved an unqualified success, and he thought their multiplication would be an undoubted evil. He must also dissent entirely from the opinion of the honourable member for Masterton with regard to the salary paid to the head of a department. A salary of £1,200 a year was not at all too large to give to an officer in charge of such an important department, for he was either worth that or worth nothing at all. He was certain that any gentleman capable of filling the position of Inspector-General of Hospitals and Asylums could obtain a much larger salary in some of our second- or third-rate towns by the practice of his profession. He had a good deal to say on some of the questions that were coming up on the estimates by-and-by with regard to the administration of the department in another branch, but would defer it until the estimates were before the House. He must, however, again most emphatically express his dissent from the views expressed by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison), and from the views of the honourable member for Masterton.

Mr. FISH said his honourable friend the member for the Buller need not be in the least alarmed that he should take any notice of what he said. He had heard the honourable gentleman too often not to know that his word had no weight or influence either in or outside of that House; therefore he thought he should be misjudging the status he himself occupied in that Chamber if he were to take any notice of what the honourable gentleman said. There was, however, just one remark of his he would notice, and that was where he insinuated that some friend of his was being covertly attacked by one of his (Mr. Fish's) questions. He did not know whether the honourable gentleman was in the House when he (Mr. Fish) spoke, but, if he was, it was perfectly certain the honourable gentlemen could not have listened to his remarks, because he was studiously careful to refrain from anything of the kind. If the honourable gentleman did know of a case that came within the limits of any one of his questions, he would like to ask from whom he got his information—who told him? How came he to know of it? He had not told the honourable gentleman. Having said this much, he had done with the honourable gentleman. The reply of the Minister to his (Mr. Fish's) remarks had been of a most unsatisfactory nature, and proved to him conclusively that that honourable gentleman was not the best man for the position he held as the political head of these institutions. He had no hesitation in saying

that, whatever the honourable gentleman's abilities might be in another direction, the remarks he had made with regard to these institutions and the mode in which they should be conducted caused him (Mr. Fish) to look upon him as not being the right man for the position. The honourable gentleman said that the staff of these institutions was necessarily a large one, and therefore there would be necessarily continual changes. He admitted both these statements; they were self-evident propositions, which need not be laid down by the honourable gentleman in answer to his remarks in any shape or form. But, whilst there must be in the nature of things numerous changes and dismissals, they ought not to be carried out without a proper and due consideration of the abilities, rights, and feelings of the employes; and, if it could be shown that any one of these employes had been dismissed through unfair animus on the part of the Inspector-General or of any of his under-officers, then it was a fair case for reproof and alteration. The honourable gentleman had said that the discipline in these institutions should and must be strict—that it must be of the strictest character. He was entirely at one with the honourable gentleman in that. The discipline in these institutions could not be too strict in its character. But, while he admitted that,—that it must be effective, and be controlled by the working-head of the department,—it should be absolutely just and honest in its character; and that was what he challenged in the particular case here referred to. The Minister had kindly told them, forsooth, that he had no wish to burke a petition. There was nothing to thank him for. The honourable gentleman and all his satellites could not prevent a petition from being presented to the House. The right of petition was one of the inherent rights of the British race, which neither he nor any hundred autocrats could take away from the people of the colony. But what he could do, and had done, was this: He had burked and prevented an inquiry from being granted to this unfortunate lady, when, according to the rules of the Civil Service, it was his duty to grant it, and she had every right to demand it. He was not saying whether this lady was a good Matron or not, but this lady had a right, the undoubted right of every man or woman in this country, and especially in the Civil Service, when summarily, arbitrarily, and autocratically dismissed, to demand an inquiry into the causes of dismissal. They were told they must not bring matters of this kind before the House. Why should they not, when the humblest among them was wronged—wronged by a person occupying a secure official position, governed, strengthened, and assisted by the Minister—why should they not bring the complaint upon the floor of the House and have it properly ventilated? He must say he had done quite right in doing what he had done, notwithstanding any remarks made to the contrary; and he should, so long as he had a seat in that House, always do exactly the

same thing. There could be no doubt at all that the Minister was dominated entirely by the official head of this department. He knew that gentleman as well as, or better than, he knew the Minister. He knew the peculiar characteristics of the Inspector of Lunatic Asylums and Hospitals, and he knew that he was just the very man that could by the force of his will—he did not say whether that force was well-directed, or whether it went any more than the wild wind in the right direction—but his force of character was such that he could as easily dominate the Ministerial head of the department as he could turn his finger. And he knew, too, that the official head of the department was inclined to be at times, and to certain persons, extremely sycophantic, and he thought if he applied a blister of that sort to the Ministerial head it would have the most soothing effect upon him possible. Therefore he thought, from the two causes to which he had alluded, that the Inspector entirely dominated the Minister, and directed the actions of the Minister, who practically had not a word to say with regard to the management of these two most important institutions. Then, it came to this: that, as a representative of the people, and as a member of that House, he had to acknowledge to himself the inability of the Minister to cope with the peculiar characteristics of the head of the department, and to consider within himself whether that gentleman was a proper person to be intrusted without Ministerial control with the important functions that he held. With the greatest respect for the opinions of other honourable members, he must say that he did not think that gentleman was professionally or otherwise the proper man for the situation he held. They were told by the Minister—tutored, of course, by the official head—that Miss Finch was neither physically nor by temperament fitted for this position. Then, if that was so, how came it that on three or four different occasions, extending over a period of more than two years, the official head of the department, in official documents, told the House and the public that this lady was eminently fitted for the position, and that continual improvement was being made under her matronship in the conduct of this asylum? If this was so, as the records proved, how did it happen that there was this sudden change of opinion? And, when he gave effect to his sudden change of opinion, why did he do so in a manner which he (Mr. Fish) was justified in saying was brutal? His conduct was unjustifiable, brusque, and rude. If it had been a chimney-sweeper who had been concerned, even then it would have been intolerable, but, when applied to a lady, he asked those honourable gentlemen who were always talking so fulsomely of women's rights to stand by them in such a case as this. He must say that the manner in which this lady had been treated by this officer, either with or without the consent of the Minister—if with his consent, then so much the worse—was brutal in its curtness, and brutal in the coarseness or roughness of language, which was calculated

to offend the sensibilities of the lady to a large degree. It had been said by the Minister that it was not correct to say that this young lady was not allowed to withdraw her resignation—that she might have been allowed to withdraw it. But the fact was that the threat was made to her that if she withdrew her resignation she would be dismissed, and would then lose the compensation she was entitled to, in common with other Civil servants. Was that a proper course for an officer to take? Was it a proper course for the Ministerial head of the department to allow to be taken—that she should be threatened that if she did withdraw her resignation she should be punished, not only, as he insinuated in his letter, by proving something detrimental to her ability as a Matron, but also that it would entail the loss of compensation to which she was entitled?

Mr. REEVES.—She was not entitled to any compensation,

Mr. FISH had yet to learn that that was the case. That was the threat, and he challenged the Minister to deny it. The threat was made to deprive her of compensation for loss of office. This lady, if he was correctly informed, was to all intents and purposes a Civil servant, and, if that was so, she was entitled to one month's salary for every year of service she had given to the State; and, if what he was informed as to what took place was correct, he must say that the treatment which this young lady had received had been brutal in the extreme. They were told that the management of these institutions was superior, or at least equal, to the management of similar institutions in any part of the world. What rubbish that was! Did they not know as a fact that there were complaints from time to time—he might say, figuratively, from day to day—from one end of the colony to the other, with regard to these institutions? They had a scandal here to-day, a scandal there to-morrow; to-day a charge here, to-morrow a charge there. From the North Cape to the Bluff there were continual complaints of bad management on the part of the resident officers of the institutions. And who could be to blame for this if it was not the official head, for whom so much had been said by the Hon. the Minister? Why, the mere fact of the existence of these things proved that he was not the man he should be, and that he did not manage these institutions in a way which was calculated to be satisfactory to the public at large. Let them look at the Seaciff Asylum inquiry now going on, where a man was being tried for libel. Let them look at the inquiry last year. Let them recollect the connection of the official head of the department with those interested in that inquiry. Let them recall the incident that took place in the railway-carriage between the head of the department and the gentleman who was going to make the inquiry. Let them look at the scandal at the Wanganui Hospital the other day. Let them remember what the honourable member for Wanganui had said on that subject. There had been a similar scandal at the Christchurch Hospital:

Mr. Fish

why had inquiry into that been burked? They had heard nothing at all about that; and yet they were told that these institutions were managed well. Why, the thing was ridiculous. He was surprised that the Minister should have said what he had said, and it only proved that the honourable gentleman was not the real head of the department. The officer he had referred to was the head and controller of these institutions, and he was untrammelled, except for official form's sake, by the Minister. If he wanted the Minister's signature he went to the Minister and got it. If he wanted the Minister's approval he went to the Minister's office, made a few remarks, and got it; and that the Minister went further than that he (Mr. Fish) did not believe, and he was sorry to have to say so. Then, the Minister had laid down this proposition, to which he (Mr. Fish) took the strongest exception: The Minister said he was strongly of opinion—notwithstanding his attempt to get out of it on what he called a personal explanation—that inquiries and commissions ought not to be held. What did that mean? It meant this: that, if that view was to be carried out, the whole power and control of these institutions would be in the hands of the Minister, or, in the present case, in the hands of the officer he had alluded to. What would be the result? Every official in these institutions would know that he was entirely at the mercy of the official head, and a system of toadyism would spring up in the ranks of the employés at these institutions. That was the system which had been attempted to be carried out by the Government; and yet they had the Minister telling them that there should be no Boards of inquiry set up to inquire into cases of injustice done to the employés. He was surprised, and he felt humiliated, when he heard the Minister say what he did. It might be true, as had been stated by the Minister, that the officer to whom he had referred was very enthusiastic. But they found that enthusiasm sometimes with some people—and especially with gentlemen of the peculiar characteristics of the officer referred to—was another name for doggedness, autocracy, domineering, and tyrannical conduct; and he would not withdraw one of those words which he had used in his opening remarks with regard to the official head of the department. Did they not know that wherever that gentleman went you could find his trail inevitably by the friction that he left behind him in every part of the colony? Let honourable members ask the gentlemen in charge of the Hospital and Charitable Aid Boards—those independent Boards put, fortunately for the people, as buffers between the people and the Ministerial head of the department, and in this case the official head of the department—let honourable members ask these Boards what was their experience, and from one end of the colony to the other they would find there was a widespread complaint of the irritation he caused and the obstinacy with which he disregarded all their complaints and waved them aside with a wave of the hand. Some honour-

able gentlemen seemed to think it degrading and undignified to say one word about the management of our institutions. They were told that a member of Parliament must hold his tongue, because it was *infra dig.*—it was not delicate. Remarks of that kind would not influence him in the least. He despised such statements, and he thought they were often only made to cover up and hide deficiencies which ought to be exposed to the public gaze. They were told also—and this was another admission which was most astonishing to him—the Minister stated that if he had his way he would re-engage this officer for a term of years, and at his present salary. He understood that this gentleman's engagement was entered into by a Conservative Government—as the honourable gentleman would call them; and he would like to ask him—

AN HON. MEMBER.—No.

MR. FISH said, Well, it was by a personal friend, Sir Robert Stout.

MR. FISHER.—Stout-Buckley.

MR. FISH said, Yes; and that would account for many other little things he knew of, but which he would not speak of more plainly than he had done that day—that would account for them all. He would ask the honourable gentleman this: By what authority and reasoning did he justify the appointment for a term of years of this particular officer when such was not done in the case of other officers? Why should he be given a three years' engagement? Were his services of so intrinsically valuable a character that the Government of the day, and especially a Liberal and democratic Government, should go to him on their knees and say, "Will you kindly stop with us?—and, if you do, we will give you this large salary and a three years' engagement"? He and others had opposed the engagement for a term. He trusted the other members of the Government would not allow the Minister of Justice to have his way upon this occasion. It had been said by his colleague, the honourable member for Dunedin City, that £600 was a sufficient recompense for the gentleman holding this office; but he did not agree with that—a gentleman with the requisite professional standing deserved more than that. He however utterly denied that the professional standing of the gentleman to whom they had been referring was of such a character as to justify the payment of the salary he received—£1,200. He was strongly of opinion that no greater benefit could be conferred upon the community of New Zealand than that there should be a rigid and impartial inquiry into the management of the whole of our institutions connected with charitable aid, hospitals, and lunatic asylums. That would be a Commission, he was sure, which it would pay the colony well to set up. They would then find out where the weak spots of these institutions were, and might also provide for a management that would be effective in its working and in the interests of the general public. He had brought the question up that

day from a strong conviction that he was acting rightly in doing so, and, when he thought he was right, no power on earth would prevent him from doing what he deemed to be his duty on the floor of the House. In making his opening remarks he had considered the matter very carefully, and he had been very careful not in any way to prejudice the case of the young lady to whom he had referred. But what was the good of talking? It made one's blood boil—at least it did his—when he considered this matter. What justice could she get on the floor of the House? She had been denied an impartial inquiry by the Government; and what could she get in the House? She would petition the House; a Committee in all probability would make a report that she had been wrongly treated, but would modify it so as not to move the susceptibilities of Ministers, because there were always Ministerial majorities on Committees, and the thing was likely to go no further, and the Government would ignore her claim. In many cases petitioning the House was simply a perfect farce, unless the petitioner happened to be a personal political friend of the Government: unless that was so, the recommendations of Committees were seldom given effect to. He felt that he had done his duty in speaking as he had done that day. He should have done exactly the same during the discussion on the estimates of the department had he been in the House at the time, but, having lost that opportunity, he had taken the earliest opportunity of bringing the matter up. Although he was not satisfied with the answer of the Government to his questions, still he was certain that the discussion which had taken place would awaken the minds of the people on this matter, and more questions would be asked in regard to it. He had another question to ask with regard to something which he had been told had occurred at Christchurch, and he would put a question on the subject presently. He would say again he was not going to be deterred from putting these questions by any false feeling of delicacy because the person to whom he referred was not within the walls of the House to answer the charges. It would always be found—and he was sure honourable members would agree with him in this—that in the case of Civil servants moving in the higher social circles in Wellington they never lacked friends on the floor of the House. If, however, it was the case of some understrapper in the service, his case would receive very different treatment. In the case, however, of a gentleman who moved among the upper circles in Wellington, it was a thankless thing to attempt to bring his name up on the floor of the House. They had seen such things before, and they would see them again: and his honourable friends around him knew that this was so. Although some time had been occupied in the discussion on this question, he did not think, under the special circumstances, that the time had been wasted.

Motion for adjournment negatived.

APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS.

Mr. HARKNESS asked the Minister of Education, If his attention has been directed to a resolution passed at a meeting of householders held at Nelson on 3rd August, 1893? If so, is it the intention of the Government to amend clause 45 of "The Education Act, 1877," so as to prevent a recurrence of the difficulty which may at any future time occur between Education Boards and School Committees in reference to the appointment and transfer of teachers?

Mr. REEVES was understood to say that he was not aware the Act needed amendment in the direction which the honourable gentleman stated. As a rule the Boards and Committees got on well together.

TEACHERS' SALARIES.

Mr. MEREDITH asked the Minister of Education, If he has received the following resolution from the North Canterbury Education Board—namely, "That, in the opinion of this Board, the present system of payment of salaries to teachers on the strict average is unfair and unjust; and that the Minister of Education be asked to consider the advisability of adopting a more equitable basis for the payment of teachers' salaries"; and, if so, will he give effect to the recommendation?

Mr. REEVES could not say that he would be able this session to deal with the question. As regarded the difference between the strict and the working average, did the honourable gentleman refer to the system of paying capita- tion on the strict average?

Mr. MEREDITH.—Yes.

Mr. REEVES said he had an inquiry going on at the present time, and when it was finished he hoped to be able to come to a conclusion as to the exact difference between the working of the strict and the working average. They might restore the strict average for one or two portions of the year so as to ascertain the effect.

NAPIER BREAKWATER.

Mr. SWAN asked the Government, If, taking into consideration the very exceptional circumstances in connection with the Napier breakwater—namely, that this large and important work is really a colonial work, inasmuch as it will be a harbour of refuge for the East Coast, and the only safe harbour for vessels to make for in bad weather between Wellington and Auckland, covering a coast-line of near six hundred miles; that the cost of the work when finished will be over £500,000, every penny of which is borne by the district; that when the work was projected the duty on cement (1s. per cask) was remitted, but the remission was subsequently revoked, and the duty increased to 2s. per cask, which meant an unexpected outlay for duty of £10,500—looking at the above circumstances, will the Government allow the cement for this great public work to come in duty-free? This matter was of such great importance to the colony generally that he hoped

he would have a favourable answer to the question.

Mr. WARD might say, in reply to the honourable gentleman, that what he asked could not possibly be done. It could not be done without a change in the law in the first place; and, in the second place, if they granted the request they would have a similar application from every Harbour Board in the colony which found it necessary to use cement for carrying out its works. Therefore he was not able to hold out the slightest hope to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. SWAN said he believed he was precluded from moving the adjournment of the House at that time, but he would take another opportunity of doing so.

INFLUX OF CRIMINALS.

Mr. DUTHIE asked, Whether, having regard to the recent influx of the criminal class and increase of crime in the colony, the Government intend to give effect to the recommendation of the Commissioner and increase the Police Force?

Mr. SEDDON said that, so far as they could judge from reports to hand, there was no sufficient cause shown for increasing the strength of the Police Force generally throughout the colony. It might be that in some parts there was a little need for doing so; but, taking the colony as a whole, he could not see any necessity for strengthening the Force. As regarded the other parts of the colony alluded to, steps would be taken to see that due protection was given.

CHARITABLE AID.

Mr. HOGG asked the Government, Whether, seeing that the expenditure of the State in hospital and charitable aid has reached the colossal dimensions of £154,000, and that the Inspector of Hospitals and Asylums reports that "a change of the law is urgently required," they will be prepared to deal with the question of charitable-aid reform without further delay, or, at least, to indicate the direction which they consider reform should take before the close of the present session, so that the question may be submitted to the electors of the colony?

Mr. REEVES said he had stated the previous day that he was afraid that during the present session the course of public business would hardly permit of it.

THAMES AND COROMANDEL HOSPITALS.

Mr. MCGOWAN asked the Minister of Education, If he is aware that the endowments made by the General and Provincial Governments for hospitals in Auckland are monopolized by one institution? If so aware, will he take steps to set apart a portion of the 250,000 acres of land mentioned in section 88 of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885," as an endowment for the Thames and Coromandel District Hospitals?

Mr. REEVES said the Auckland Hospital Reserves Act of 1883 vested many hospital

reserves in the Public Trustee under security for a loan raised for the purposes of the Auckland Hospital and the buildings there. These reserves were a most valuable property, and no doubt an income was derived from them. Some other reserves were vested in the Auckland Charitable Aid Board. There were others which were not dealt with which the Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act of 1885 enabled the Government to vest in a particular district, if applied to for that purpose. The only reserve in the Coromandel district was half an acre in the Township of Buckingham, but it was of little value. No steps had been taken under section 18 of the Act of 1885 to set aside this land as an endowment, but should any application be made by the people in the honourable gentleman's district to the Hospital Trustees they could of course take action.

GUMFIELDS.

Mr. PALMER asked the Government,—(1) If they intend to fix a time for the House to discuss the Gumfields Report; and (2) do the Government intend to introduce any legislation in regard to the gumfields and gum-diggers this session? He would point out to the Minister that the Government were now taking away private members' days, and it was impossible therefore for any private member to bring in a measure in regard to the gumfields, the influx of Austrians, and so forth. He had himself introduced a Bill on the subject, but, as private members' days had been taken away, his Bill, along with other Bills of private members, would now be killed. He had received a petition from 876 settlers and gum-diggers praying for legislation against the influx of the Austrians on the gumfields; and if the Government intended to bring in a Bill on the subject he would reserve his petition—following the step taken by the honourable member for Ellesmere in regard to the woman's franchise—until it was before the House, when he would press this petition in support of some legislation. He would like to have an answer from the Minister as to what the Government intended to do.

Mr. SEDDON said it was impossible to state the time when the discussion of the report of the Commissioners would take place. It was, he might say, an elaborate and a very good report. An inquiry of an exhaustive character had taken place, and the Government considered the House should have an opportunity of discussing the report. When they came to a conclusion as to the time for discussing it he would acquaint the honourable gentleman with it.

Mr. PALMER asked if the Government had made up their mind to bring down some legislation on the subject.

Mr. SEDDON said they had not made up their mind on the question.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE AID.

Mr. W. KELLY asked the Government, If the provisions of section 88 of "The Hospitals and Charitable Institutions Act, 1885," have

been complied with since the passing of the said Act? If not, will the Government take immediate steps to have the provisions of the section quoted carried into effect, in order to relieve the present great strain upon the finances of the local bodies, which have to contribute an unduly large share towards the maintenance of institutions? This was a very important question, and one in respect of which something should have been done long before this. In 1885 an Act was passed authorising the purchase of 250,000 acres of land as endowments for the Charitable Aid Boards all over the colony. He believed nothing had been done in that respect yet, and the Charitable Aid Boards were languishing for want of funds in many parts of the colony. He thought something ought to be done, and he simply put the question to stir up the Government in the matter.

Mr. REEVES said it was quite true that the Act had not been complied with, but he was afraid he could not promise that the Government would take immediate steps to have it complied with, although he would be very glad to see it done.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON asked the Minister of Defence, If, during the recess, he will cause a scheme of superannuation for the Police Force to be formulated; said scheme, with such amendments in detail as he may consider necessary, to be based on the lines of a scheme agreed to almost unanimously by the members of the Force, and submitted to Government in 1892?

Mr. SEDDON said the Government had already given this question of the superannuation of the police consideration, and, though the scheme referred to was not before the House, he thought it might be altered so as to meet the case of each and every servant they had in the colony. He believed any scheme that was submitted ought to deal generally with the Public Service, and not merely with one branch of the Service.

OTOROHANGA NATIVE LAND COURT.

Mr. SHERA asked the Minister in charge of Native Affairs, When the Native Land Court at Otorohanga will again sit there? The sitting of the Court at Otorohanga was a very important matter. He hoped the Minister would give a favourable reply. If he did not, he would repeat the question again.

Mr. REEVES was afraid it was impossible to say when. All the Judges were engaged elsewhere holding Courts the sittings of which were likely to last some months.

R. FOSTER.

Mr. RHODES asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether the Government will place a sum on the supplementary estimates to pay Reginald Foster the compensation asked for in a petition reported on by the Public Petitions Committee on the 7th October, 1892?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE might say that this officer was retired on the 31st March, 1892,

compensation being calculated on £800, the salary received by him at that date. He however claimed that it should have been calculated on £400, the salary he had drawn up to July, 1891. If the compensation asked for were given it would mean that a very large sum of money would have to be paid.

CHRISTCHURCH NIGHT WATCHMAN.

Mr. MOORE asked the Minister of Justice, Whether it is a fact that the night watchman at the Christchurch Police Dépôt is compelled to remain on duty for ten consecutive hours — namely, from nine p.m. till seven a.m. — whereas the Police Regulations provide that the hours of the night-relief are from nine p.m. till five a.m.?

Mr. SEDDON said he had received no definite information upon this question. He had telegraphed to Christchurch, and on receipt of the information he would give it to the honourable gentleman.

NATIVE ACTS.

Mr. PARATA asked the Government, Whether they will have a reprint in Maori and English made of all the Native Acts dating from the establishment of the Colony of New Zealand? It was desirable the Natives should make themselves acquainted with these laws, and for that purpose it would be a great advantage to have them bound up in one volume. Instead of the Natives having to look up all these Acts, it was only right that they should be able to get all the Acts together, and, if the Government could see its way to do what he asked he was sure the money it cost would be recouped.

Mr. REEVES was afraid he could not give the honourable gentleman a favourable answer. The expense involved would be very considerable, and he hardly thought the step was necessary. Most of the recent Acts were in print, and in Maori also, he was informed.

LINCOLN SCHOOL OF AGRICULTURE.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked the Minister of Agriculture, Whether he has received an application requesting that the Government will take the necessary steps for providing for the repayment to the account of the School of Agriculture at Lincoln of the sum of £5,000, which is agreed to be due to that account from the funds of the Canterbury College?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, Yes. Letters had been received from the Canterbury Agricultural Society, asking the Government to introduce a Bill to make available for scholarships, *et cetera*, the sum of £5,000—part of a sum of £7,900 believed to be due to the School of Agriculture from other departments of the Canterbury College. Before this could be done he thought the consent of the parties directly interested in the matter should be got.

Mr. ROLLESTON said it had been got to the repayment of the £5,000.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government had the matter under consideration at the present time. Whether they would be able to introduce a Bill this session he could not say.

Mr. J. McKenzie

Mr. ROLLESTON said it need only be a very short Bill. The matter was very important.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Government had the matter under consideration.

AWAKINO BLOCK.

Mr. SHERA asked the Government, If they will put a sum on the estimates to make a stock-road through the Awakino Block, so as to enable stock to be driven from Taranaki to the Waikato? He wished to point out to the Minister that the road would have the effect of increasing the value of stock in the North of Auckland five shillings a head. He hoped the Minister would be able to give a favourable reply.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the matter was under consideration at present, and an officer in the district had been asked to report on the road. If the report was favourable, and the matter was shown to be one of great urgency, he hoped provision would be made for it on the estimates.

WEST COAST SETTLEMENT RESERVES.

Mr. HARKNESS asked the Premier, Is the Government aware that sums of money have been paid on or about December last to the Public Trustee on account of rents accrued under "The West Coast Settlement Reserves Act, 1892," and that up to date the amounts due to the several Maori beneficiaries have not yet been paid; and will the Government in future have these payments more promptly made?

Mr. WARD said this referred to a sum of £1,135 which was lodged with the Public Trustee last December on account of "fair rent" for the period which had elapsed from the expiration of the old lease to the date of the application. The Public Trustee delayed its distribution in order that he might satisfy himself, from the present actual value of the land, that the amount was beyond all question paid. The land had now been examined, and the report was expected daily, from which the value of the land would be fixed. The distribution of the money would then take place. He might inform the honourable gentleman that the examination of the land had been delayed by bad weather.

SALE OF ALCOHOLIC LIQUOR AT SYDENHAM.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Minister of Justice, What steps the Government intend to take to prevent the illegal sale of alcoholic liquor in Sydenham? He wished to state the position in which the matter stood. A Licensing Committee was elected about three years ago for Sydenham, and at their first meeting they refused certain licenses. Their right to refuse them was tested in the Supreme Court and the Appeal Court, and it was decided that they had the right to refuse them. The Committee met next year, and refused the three licenses that had been formerly granted. There was an appeal to the Courts, and the Appeal Court decided that the Committee was wrong. Pend-

ing that decision, the publicans continued selling without license, and without paying fees. Then there were new licensing districts created, and new Committees chosen. Licenses were granted, and the Court held these were illegal; but the licensees were still selling. Seeing, therefore, that this was practically sly grog-selling, he wished to know what steps would be taken by the Government.

Mr. REEVES said his information from the Police Department was to the effect that the police did not intend to proceed in the matter. It was, of course, open to any private person to do so.

WAITAKI LAND.

Mr. DUNCAN asked the Minister of Lands, What lands, if any, have been acquired for settlement under the Act for purchase of lands for settlement in the Waitaki County, what lands have been offered, and what was the nature of the report made by the Commissioners in each case, and whether there are lands offered and not reported upon? And, further, what steps, if any, have the Government taken to acquire lands for settlement in this county? And, further, do the Government intend to pass a Bill this session to empower the Minister to take lands for settlement by arbitration or under the same regulations as lands are now taken under the Public Works Act?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that no lands had been acquired in Waitaki County under the Act in question. Six properties had been offered, and had been declined, the price of some of them being too high, and some being unsuitable. There were some lands in the Waitareka Valley which were at present under offer, and would be dealt with by the Commissioners at their next meeting, and he hoped to be able to purchase some there.

EKETAHUNA-ALFREDTON TELEPHONE.

Mr. HOGG asked the Postmaster-General, If, in view of the large amount of settlement that is going on in the district, and the great benefit which the expenditure involved would confer on a numerous body of settlers, he will make provision for the extension of the telephone service from Eketahuna to Alfredton? The necessary expenditure would be trifling and would prove reproductive, and, as it would be of immense advantage to a large body of settlers, he hoped for a favourable reply.

Mr. WARD said the matter would be considered, with a view to seeing what could be done.

NATIVE LAND (VALIDATION OF TITLES) BILL.

Mr. SEDDON.—I formally move the second reading of this Bill. I propose to refer it to the Native Affairs Committee, and when it comes back from the Committee the discussion on it can be taken.

Mr. SHERA.—We passed last session a Native Land (Validation of Titles) Bill, and it would appear by the introduction of this Bill

that the fence erected was too high for the transgressions of those who have broken the law to get over. The Bill was carefully guarded so as to prevent those persons who had broken the law in the inception of their transactions from getting their titles; and I think, before the second reading of this Bill is allowed to pass, there should be a full explanation from the Government as to why this Bill has been introduced. Honourable members will recollect that there was considerable discussion on the subject at the end of last session, and it was with very great reluctance that the House passed the Bill. But the House provided certain safeguards. Is it the wish of the Government to remove those safeguards?

Mr. SEDDON.—In reply, I desire to say that this Bill has safeguards much more complete than those in the measure of last session, and the powers of the Judge are restricted also much more than in last year's Act. I quite agree with the honourable gentleman that in legislation of this kind, dealing with transactions in the inception of which there has been absolute wrongdoing and illegality, power should not be given to any Judge to validate such transactions; and this Bill is completely safeguarded in that direction. I shall be pleased, however, if the honourable gentleman will place any suggestions he may have to make before the Native Affairs Committee, and will assist in passing the Bill with every safeguard, and at the same time remove disabilities in those cases where there has been no illegality, or where the disabilities have been occasioned by the passing of laws, and in this way promote the settlement of the country.

Mr. KAPA.—I wish to ask the Premier a question. I wish to know whether, under the proposed measure, the Natives will be allowed to make application to have their grievances inquired into, as was provided for by a clause in the Act of last year. I refer particularly to clause 19 of the Act of last year.

Mr. SEDDON.—When the Bill is before the Native Affairs Committee opportunity will be given to the honourable member to propose that clause, and it will be dealt with by the Committee. I do not see any serious objection to including it in this Bill.

Bill read a second time.

CHEVIOT ESTATE DISPOSITION BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 5.—Residue of the estate to be rural land.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved, That the words "sold or," in line 26, be struck out.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 50.

Allen	Carroll	Hall
Blake	Dawson	Hall-Jones
Buckland	Duthie	Harkness
Buick	Fish	Houston
Cadman	Fisher	Hutchison, W.
Carncross	Fraser	Kapa

Kelly, J.	Newman	Smith, W. C.
Kelly, W.	Palmer	Swan
Lake	Parata	Taipua
Mackenzie, M.	Pinkerton	Thompson, R.
Mackintosh	Reeves	Thompson, T.
McGowan	Richardson	Ward
McGuire	Rolleston	Wilson
McKenzie, J.	Russell	Wright.
Mills, C. H.	Saunders	<i>Tellers.</i>
Mitchelson	Seddon	Mackenzie, T.
Moore	Shera	Meredith.

NOES, 7.

Hogg		<i>Tellers.</i>
Joyce	Sandford	Earnshaw
McLean	Tanner.	Taylor.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Buchanan
Rhodes	Lawry
Smith, E. M.	Bruce
Willis.	Valentine.

Majority for, 43.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved, That the following words be struck out: "in the following proportions: One-third part thereof shall be sold for cash by public auction"; with the view of inserting the following words in lieu thereof: "Not more than one-third part of the estate as a whole shall be sold for cash."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 50.

Allen	Hutchison, W.	Pinkerton
Blake	Kapa	Rolleston
Buckland	Kelly, J.	Russell
Buick	Kelly, W.	Saunders
Cadman	Lake	Seddon
Carncross	Mackenzie, M.	Shera
Carroll	Mackintosh	Smith, W. C.
Dawson	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Duthie	McLean	Taylor
Fish	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Fisher	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, T.
Hall	Mitchelson	Ward
Hall-Jones	Moore	Wilson
Hamlin	Newman	Wright.
Harkness	O'Connor	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Palmer	Fraser
Houston	Parata	McGowan.

NOES, 4.

Joyce	<i>Tellers.</i>
Tanner.	Earnshaw
	Sandford.

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Buchanan
Rhodes	Lawry
Smith, E. M.	Reeves, W. P.
Willis.	Valentine.

Majority for, 46.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. EARNSHAW moved, That, in line 29, "One-third part thereof shall be disposed of upon lease in perpetuity," the word "per-

petual" be inserted before "lease," and that "in perpetuity" be struck out.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 19.

Allen	Mitchelson	Taipua
Duthie	Newman	Tanner
Fisher	Parata	Wilson.
Hamlin	Reeves	
Kapa	Richardson	<i>Tellers.</i>
Lake,	Rolleston	Earnshaw
Mackenzie, M.	Sandford	Joyce.

NOES, 30.

Blake	McKenzie, J.	Shera
Buick	McGowan	Smith, W. C.
Cadman	McLean	Taylor
Hall	Meredith	Thompson, R.
Hall-Jones	Moore	Thompson, T.
Hogg	O'Connor	Ward
Houston	Palmer	Wright.
Hutchison, W.	Russell	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Saunders	Carncross
Kelly, W.	Seddon	Mills, C. H.
Mackintosh		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Dawson	Bruce
Duncan	Buchanan
Lawry	Swan
Pinkerton	Fish
Rhodes	Hutchison, G.
Smith, E. M.	Harkness
Willis.	Valentine.

Majority against, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 19.—Power to sell the mansion-house and land adjacent.

Mr. SANDFORD moved, That the words "not exceeding five thousand acres" be inserted after the word "land," in the third line of the clause.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 10.

Hall-Jones	Newman	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Reeves	Sandford
Joyce	Smith, W. C.	Tanner.
McLean	Taylor.	

NOES, 39.

Allen	Lawry	Rolleston
Buckland	Mackenzie, M.	Russell
Buick	Mackintosh	Saunders
Cadman	McGowan	Seddon
Carncross	McGuire	Shera
Duthie	McKenzie, J.	Taipua
Fisher	Mills, C. H.	Thompson, R.
Hall	Moore	Ward
Harkness	O'Connor	Wilson
Houston	Palmer	Wright.
Hutchison, W.	Parata	<i>Tellers.</i>
Kelly, J.	Pinkerton	Blake
Kelly, W.	Richardson	Meredith.
Lake		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Bruce	Smith, E. M.
Buchanan	Duncan

Hutchison, G.	Rhodes
Swan	Dawson
Willis.	Valentine.

Majority against, 29.

Amendment negatived.
Bill reported.

BANK-NOTE ISSUE BILL.

Mr. WARD.—Sir, honourable members will doubtless expect some reasons to be given by me for asking the House to allow this Bill to be put through all its stages this evening. I would remind the House that in the Financial Statement an indication was given by the Government that it might be necessary to introduce bank legislation; but it was not anticipated that there would be any actual necessity for the Bill honourable members have now in their hands. But there are circumstances which render it desirable that the Government should, as a precautionary step, be prepared, if any necessity should arise, to cope with any difficulty that might take place, and to do what might seem necessary in the best interests of the country. I think it will be admitted, when legislation upon an important matter of this kind is introduced into the House, that there should be no such thing as delay in putting it through all its stages. I think the reasons for that will be obvious to every honourable member. I desire to say that there is not, so far as the Government are aware, any immediate necessity for this Bill being placed upon the statute-book. Honourable members are aware that in the adjacent colonies, for some months past, a keen financial crisis has existed, but this colony has been fortunate enough to have escaped the disaster that has overtaken every class of people in the more unfortunate neighbouring colonies. A circumstance has arisen during the last day or two in the North of this colony which has brought prominently before every member of this House the fact that even in a small way a financial panic in a city may arise without the slightest cause. I refer specially to a run which has been reported to have occurred in connection with a powerful institution in the City of Auckland. I must say that it seems extraordinary that that run should have taken place. The institution in question is a strong one financially; its investments are sound, and, in addition to that, it has very large resources. Nevertheless, without any apparent reason, a small panic—a very small one indeed, I am glad to say—has occurred there. I may state that this institution has invested in securities of this colony the sum of £125,000, and of course I may intimate to honourable members that this is a liquid asset, and they will at once see it is available for the institution should it require it. That being so, it does seem to me the more extraordinary that some people in that city, without cause, should have taken such action as has resulted in a small panic, and a run being made upon the institution. I have every reason to believe that that panic will be allayed without the least

difficulty. I may, however, say that the Government think it necessary that they should, without the slightest hesitancy, guarantee the deposits of the institution, so sure are the Government that the institution is thoroughly and absolutely sound. I think it right, in proposing this Bill, that I should explain the circumstances which have brought this matter prominently before us. Now, Sir, it is quite unlikely, I think, that, as a result of the disturbance that has taken place in the financial world of Auckland, any trouble will arise in any other portions of this colony. On the other hand, I think that honourable members will agree with me that, as we have seen what has taken place in that portion of the colony without the slightest justification, the representatives of the people assembled here are in duty bound to take such steps as we may deem necessary to prevent the slightest possibility of a disaster overtaking any institution of this colony. I have to state that this step is entirely one of a precautionary character. If honourable members will be good enough to look at the provisions of the Bill they will see that under it this country undertakes no financial responsibility or liability whatever. Honourable members, by referring to the clauses of the Bill, will see at once that we do not undertake to guarantee any bank or any bank-notes. We do not, as a matter of fact, propose that this legislation, when it passes through the House, should be available by any institution in this country unless extraordinary circumstances should arise, and then the main provisions of the measure would only be put into operation by the Governor in Council. Members will observe by looking at the Bill that it is not intended to be an Act of a permanent character. The whole of its provisions, except one clause in Part I., are of a temporary nature. Part I., it will be observed, provides that which is necessary to make a Bill such as this effective. It makes the notes of all banking institutions trading in this colony a first charge upon their assets. That being so, honourable members will see that, if the assets of a bank exceed its notes, should the time arrive when this colony, by Order in Council under the provisions of this measure in Part II., should find it necessary to make these notes a legal tender, the colony would undertake no direct financial liability, the notes issued by the bank being a first charge against its assets. That is a very important point. I wish the House to realise clearly what it means. It means that, the bank-notes being a first charge upon its assets, should it ever be necessary under the provisions of this Bill to issue such a Proclamation as is mentioned in clause 5, then the colony will undertake no direct financial liability or responsibility by so doing; it will be secured by the whole of the assets of the bank as against the note-issue. In this respect I may say that this legislation is assimilated to that passed a short time ago in New South Wales. There a similar provision was put upon the statute-book, the only difference between that and the Bill now intro-

duced into the House being that it was passed when the colony was in the throes of a great financial panic, and there was an upheaval of every branch of industry, and that in the height of that upheaval they put on the statute-book that which we are in a time of perfect quiet asking the House to assent to; and after it was placed on the statute-book the panic which existed, and which was a very severe one indeed, was allayed, and those clauses of the Bill which made a permanent provision in the Act enabled the colony to overcome what threatened to be a ruinous financial catastrophe. That is the only permanent clause that honourable members are asked to approve of, so far as this Bill is concerned. Now, Sir, we propose that Part II. shall be of a temporary character only, and shall expire in twelve months, or within two months after the next meeting of Parliament. Honourable members will see that nothing can be done, should any necessity arise, under this portion of the Bill without the Government placing the whole of the circumstances of the matter before the House, and asking them to legislate afresh for a re-enactment of this measure, should it be necessary. It will also be seen, by reading the Bill, that it is not intended, should a Proclamation ever be issued, to even render it possible for a bank's notes to be made a legal tender unless the Governor in Council is satisfied that the assets of the bank and its credits exceed its liabilities by at least the amount of its paid-up capital and the reserved profits. That is a very important point. We have, I may say, a double security under the proposals of this Bill. We have, in the first place, the assets of the bank made the first security against the note-issue; and we have, in the second place, the double assurance that, even should a Proclamation be issued under the Second Part of this Bill, the Governor in Council cannot allow any bank which is desirous of taking advantage of the Act to avail itself of it unless its assets exceed its liabilities by at least the sum of its paid-up capital and the reserved profits. And another important point is that, even should it be necessary—and I do not think it will be—but even should it be so, that the notes of a bank should be made a legal tender in this country by Proclamation, it is not intended it should be so for a longer period than six months. The whole object of this Bill is intended by the Government, as I have said, to be of a temporary character. There never has been a time, perhaps, in the history of the world when such an extraordinary financial crisis as we have lately seen in the adjacent colonies has taken place; and I think that, considering the strong position that this country occupies, and the very close association between its prosperous position and the institutions which conduct the financial operations of every industry in the country, honourable members will agree with me that the Government would be wanting in its duty to the people of this colony if it did not enable itself, by proper legislative provisions, should the occasion arise, to prevent a panic from occur-

Mr. Ward

ring in this country. I may say that, so far as the Government is aware, no financial institution in the colony requires assistance under this Bill. We have had no indication, no intimation, that the provisions of this Bill are necessary in regard to any financial institution of the country; but, taking into consideration the whole circumstances of the disturbed financial position of affairs outside the colony, we do not believe it is right that the great interests involved should be allowed to run the slightest possible risk for the want of doing that which reasonable men should do, so long as they are not imposing a heavy financial liability upon the colony. I think the present position verifies what I stated at an earlier period of the session. I then remarked how desirable and necessary it was in times of peace to be prepared for war. If honourable members who have had the Bill in their hands will peruse the various clauses, I think they will agree with me in saying that there is nothing in this Bill of what may be termed an experimental character. It is a Bill framed upon the basis of being put in practice if required. It is a Bill which—in almost every particular but one, and that is the extension of the period from one to two months after the meeting of Parliament, in clause 5—closely resembles the Bill passed by New South Wales some two months ago. I may state that the Government for some months past has been in close touch with the Governments of the other colonies in order to assimilate, if possible, the necessary legislation in important matters which are calculated to have an important effect upon the progress of this country and of the other colonies; and the House, if it places this legislation on the statute-book, will have passed a measure which, so far as this particular subject is concerned, is upon all fours with that found necessary during a severe panic in the Colony of New South Wales. I repeat, Sir, that at present, and as far as we can see, there is no likelihood of the temporary provisions of this Bill being required; but I also repeat that, in the opinion of the Government, it is necessary and desirable that the Governor in Council should have the power to take such steps as are proposed under this Bill to prevent a panic from arising in this country. And I would go further and say that, had the great Colony of New South Wales placed upon its statute-book a few months sooner than it did a measure similar to the one I am now asking the House to pass through all its stages, the great financial disaster, the great disturbance of trade, the troubles between the masses and the classes, that have taken place in that colony would have been averted; and in that belief, and as prudent men, I think we should, guided by the experience of our neighbours, not allow time to pass by, but take Time by the forelock, and place upon the statute-book an Act which I venture to say may be of considerable value to this colony. This I may say is in no sense a party matter. I am glad to know that honourable members on the other side of the House,

equally with those on this side, are animated by a common desire to do that which under circumstances of this kind they believe to be for their country's good. And, Sir, under the belief that this measure is necessary, I hope that honourable members on all sides will support it. It has received the careful and matured consideration of the Government. I now ask the House to pass this Bill. I am certain that leading members on the other side of the House, equally with the Government, are anxious and desirous that no disaster of any description should overtake this country. I am confident that, equally with the members of the Government, it is the desire to see that this colony does not, for want of legislation passing through this House, get even on the verge of anything in the shape of financial trouble. I confidently believe that we shall escape anything in the shape of financial troubles in this country. And, believing that, at the same time I also believe the House will be doing wisely and well in enabling the Governor in Council, if it be found desirable, to take advantage of the proposals contained in this Bill; and I now have much pleasure in asking the House to allow the Bill to pass through all its stages.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The Colonial Treasurer has put his case, I think, very clearly to the House. The Government is taking upon itself a great responsibility, and the occasion, I think, is one when the House ought to back the Government in taking that responsibility. At any rate, I think this: that to take any other course would involve on the part of private members of this House a responsibility which I do not think any member is prepared to take. No persons could take the responsibility involved in this question but the Government of the country, with the knowledge in their possession—a knowledge superior to that of private members of this House. It is not, Sir, as though the question was a new one to any of us. I venture to think it is one that has occupied the minds of all thoughtful men in this House for weeks past—aye, for months past. The position, in fact, is briefly this, according as I understand it: that the House could not properly separate for the recess, with a dissolution in view, without making some provision against possible financial difficulties such as has been made in the other colonies. That being the case it is only a question of when that action should be taken, and I think the Government are doing right in bringing this question down in such a way and at such a time as commends itself especially to the minds of honourable members. I do not think that there is any reason for panic; and I may say I am sure that honourable members would have desired to see what would have been the case—what I believe will now be the case—that this temporary trouble which has arisen would have solved itself; that it would have been better, if we could have been sure that any further difficulty of that character would not occur afterwards, that it should have been left to solve itself. But the position is that

the wisest of men cannot tell what will occur in the months when Parliament cannot sit, and it is advisable, therefore, as I think, to put ourselves on uniform lines with the Australian Colonies—to take the course those colonies have taken, to adopt the legislation they have adopted, and which they have adopted successfully, in respect to the financial crisis. I think, in doing that, we are taking the course of wise men, and, for my part, I am prepared to cordially support the Government in the course they are taking. I do not propose to debate the details of the question at all. The Government are responsible for the details, and I believe they have approached this question with an earnest desire to serve the country, and I think that will be the general opinion of the House on the matter.

Bill read a second time.

The House resolved itself into Committee of the Whole to consider a resolution to provide for clause 7.

On the question, That the resolution be agreed to,

Mr. RICHARDSON said,—It seems to be understood that we are not to debate this Bill, but, if nobody else does, I wish to enter a few words of protest against what is being done. So far as it has been disclosed, to my mind we are not doing a wise thing. There may be matters purposely not disclosed which render this action necessary, but, so far as has been explained by the Colonial Treasurer, we have not sufficient warrant for passing legislation calling in the aid of the national credit, which this Bill proposes to do. Having said these few words, I leave the responsibility with the Government, as it is not a matter for a private member, however strong his views, to take action upon.

Resolution agreed to.

Bill read a third time.

BANKS AND BANKERS BILL.

Mr. WARD.—This Bill has been circulated for some days past, and I have no doubt honourable members are conversant with its provisions. I merely wish to say that it is a measure which is intended solely and wholly to allow any institutions that may think proper to help themselves under its provisions, and, unlike the other Bill, this one in no way, either directly or indirectly, calls for the interference of the Government, or in any way requires to be dealt with either by Order in Council or by the Government hereafter. The necessity for it, I may say, is this: Under the legislation existing at the present time, should any institution desire to increase its share-proprietory it has, under the existing banking-laws, to obtain special legislation before it can proceed. All that this Bill does in this respect is to enable the shareholders in any institution to deal with their own affairs in their own way, and to issue, if they so desire to do, preference shares. The difference between the preference shares as proposed under this Bill and the shares of an institution at the present moment is this: Now there is a liability of pound for

pound upon the shares issued by the institution, and should any institution desire to issue preference shares there is no liability over the actual amount of the face value of the shares. It may be found desirable in the interests of any institution to avail itself of the provisions of this Bill. I do not know whether they will avail themselves of it or not. I may say, at the present time, if the shareholders in any institution thought proper to increase the capital in the way proposed in this Bill, they would require to come to this House and ask for special legislation, and then, having got special legislation, they would, so far as their shares were concerned, have the extra liability of whatever amount over and above the face value of the shares existed. If the shares were, say, £5, under the existing position shareholders would be responsible for £10; but under this Bill a £5 preference share would have its exact value, and there would not be an extra liability of £5. Why the Government think it necessary to put this Bill on the statute-book is this: Every honourable member who has watched what has taken place during the last few months will realise that it is almost impossible, in the present state of feeling of those who live in distant countries, to obtain the money wanted by way of debenture. This measure will enable the shareholders in any existing institution to obtain preference shares, and so increase the capital of the institution if they want to do so. And I think every honourable member will agree with me that, without such a Bill as this on the statute-book, should any institution want to increase its capital it would have a poor chance of doing so at present under the existing law. That is, generally, the object of the Bill, and I think that the House would do well to pass it to-night, and allow it to proceed to another place as the other Bill has done. Therefore I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not propose to raise any objection to the Bill being taken through like the other Bill, though I do not admit there is any urgency, and I think the honourable gentleman does not contend there is. There is not the same necessity for it as for the other Bill; but, at the same time, as it is of a cognate character, I do not think there is any objection to proceeding with the Bill this evening. The details of the Bill are such as rather require an expert to understand, and I do not profess thoroughly to understand the position that has been described by the honourable gentleman, of the holders of these preferential shares. However, there is no doubt the general object of the Bill is to enable banks to take steps to increase their capital rather than get into trouble and then proceed to remedy that trouble by the course that is being adopted of reconstruction, and by steps which I do not think are very nice, in the commercial world at the present time. Technically, there is this objection to the Bill: that it deals generally by general enactment with a subject which has hitherto been separately and specially dealt with by specific enactments, and you are get-

ting therefore by this Bill into general legislation where hitherto the colony has only dealt by special legislation. I do not pretend to say that is an insuperable objection to the Bill, but the course proposed has this in it: It has a tendency towards what I do not wish to see, and that is, to the State taking the general control of the banking. I say this is dealing generally with banks, and the general enactment may be said to tend in that direction; but the object of the Bill, as a temporary measure dealing with abnormal circumstances, is good. I believe the Bill is one that ought to commend itself, under existing circumstances, to the House.

Bill read a second and a third time.

On the question, That the Bill do now pass,

Mr. McLEAN said,—I just want to say a few words before the Bill is passed, but I do not wish to raise a debate upon it now that it has reached its last stage. I may say, with regard to the first Bill, I think it is a much better Bill—

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman cannot discuss that Bill now.

Mr. McLEAN.—I shall not discuss it, but the two Bills are together.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—They are distinctly not together.

Mr. McLEAN.—I have only one word to say with regard to it.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman must confine his remarks to the Bill now before the House.

Mr. McLEAN.—Then, Sir, with regard to this second Bill, I have to say that we are passing it through very hurriedly, and without giving due consideration. I think that shareholders in banks may be very seriously affected by this Bill; but, as honourable gentlemen are not desirous of discussing it, I shall not discuss it, except to say that, while I approve of this Bill going through this House, it does not bind members in the future to approve of the whole of the principles of this Bill or of the Bill previously passed.

Bill passed.

LAND FOR SETTLEMENTS BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Sir, in moving the second reading of this Bill I shall be as brief as possible in the few remarks I intend to make. Honourable members will recollect that last year we passed a Land for Settlements Act, and we had hoped on that occasion to get whatever land was necessary for settlement in localities near towns, where the population would be ready to take up such lands. But I am sorry to say the Act of last session has not turned out so successful as was expected: not but what we had offered to us during the year very large areas of land under it; but, unfortunately, the land offered to us was either unsuitable for settlement, or the price was so high that we could not afford to purchase it. I may just mention to the House that the area we have been able to purchase under the Act of last year only amounted to 1,026 acres. We had offered us a very large number of proper-

ties, amounting to 139,923 acres—properties that we did not even consider worth while referring to the Boards set up for the purpose of recommending the purchase of estates. After getting information from the officers of the department and from competent authorities as to the suitability of the land for settlement, and its value, we thought in these cases it was unnecessary to refer this large area of land to the consideration of the Board, for this reason: that we were quite satisfied the Board could not recommend its purchase. Then, we had the offer of forty properties, amounting to 67,235 acres, which the Board considered, and would not recommend. The reasons why they could not recommend the purchase of this property were various. In some cases they were unsuitable for settlement. In other cases, when the land was very good, the price was too high. In other cases the land was very good, but want of water made it, in fact, worthless for cutting up into small holdings. The offers that the Board recommended for purchase related to three properties, amounting to an area of 1,026 acres. Since then we have received offers of eleven properties, amounting to 52,260 acres; but, from what I can gather from reports at present to hand in connection with this land, I am afraid we shall not be able to purchase very much of those properties. At any rate, the position now is this: that it is most difficult to get land under this Act, and, if we do get an offer of good land that is well watered and suitable to be cut up into small areas for the purposes of settlement, then the price is beyond our reach: that is, we are certain that if we purchased the land we could not get interest on our money after paying the cost of surveys and of the disposal of the land. Now, I dare say some honourable members will consider this Bill rather drastic in its character; but I think it is necessary, if we expect to get any land at all for settlement, to have a measure something similar to this. It is possible that the Bill, as drafted, may require some amendment, and I shall be prepared to receive any recommendations that will amend the Bill, if it can be put in a more satisfactory shape than it is brought down in, while at the same time giving the right to the Government to purchase the amount of land actually necessary for settlement. The first portion of the Bill provides for the compulsory taking of land, in place of voluntary, as in the Act of last session. In some parts of the colony the land has been disposed of in such a manner that we have large areas of pastoral land belonging to the Crown where so much freehold has been taken up in such a manner that it is impossible for the Crown to make use of these pastoral lands in their present shape. I may say, also, that when the leases of this pastoral country expire some of the leaseholders, who have acquired considerable areas of freehold, will themselves be put to very great disadvantage if they do not get a renewal of the leasehold of the country; while, at the same time, the Crown is entirely at the mercy of these people, because they have got the low country,—the valleys,—and unless we

give the land back to them we shall have very great difficulty in the disposal of it. I visited some of the lands myself, in the Provinces of Marlborough and Nelson, and I saw the valleys and low river-flats and gullies were all being taken up as freehold, leaving for us the ranges and back-country. I also saw some places where the Crown owned a fairly large area of country surrounded by a strip of freehold cutting away the whole of the water-frontages, and, although the land let is quite as good as the frontages, its value is largely reduced owing to the fact that there is no access to the water. On one of the properties I visited the gentleman who owned the freehold, and who at the present time has got a leasehold from the Crown, pointed out to me that if I did not give him back his country at the end of his lease he would be ruined, because this narrow strip, which had been purchased by his father in the early days, would be almost useless unless he had the same pastoral land he has got the lease of at the present time. It was then the idea occurred to me that it would be a good thing for the Minister of Lands to have power to make exchanges—that is, to get frontages, and be able to give a piece of back-country in exchange for it. I know, in the case of the property I am referring to now, that a very advantageous exchange could be made both for the present proprietor and for the Crown. Of course, I make provision for this in the Bill, to enable exchanges to be made in that way; and I feel sure that, if any member of this House chooses to go down there, to Nelson and Marlborough, and look at the properties, he will see that what I am stating is correct—that such a power to enable exchanges to be made from the Crown to the tenants, and from the tenants to the Crown, would be for their mutual benefit. There is another provision which I think is necessary. In some places we have no frontages at all, and no exchange can be carried out that would be of any benefit. However, I think we should have the right of purchasing frontages to enable us to promote settlement. I regret very much that it is necessary in a young country like New Zealand—that we should have arrived at that stage when we have large areas of back pastoral country useless to the Crown, and which can only be disposed of to the people who have got the frontages. At the present time we have got large areas of this country, the leases of which have expired, and the present freeholders occupy the frontages for keeping down the rabbits. In one instance we were giving something like ninety thousand or one hundred thousand acres to the freeholder for the purpose of keeping down the rabbits, and paying him, besides, a sum of money to assist him in keeping them down. It must be apparent to members of this House that such a system as that must be very injurious to the colony, and it is necessary, if we would make good use of that back-country, that we should have power to purchase sufficient frontages to enable it to be made good use of. There is another provision, which will enable

the Government to arrange with freeholders who possess a piece of agricultural country suitable for small settlement, and give in exchange for it pastoral country that can only be used for all time to come as pastoral country. There is another provision in the Bill to which, I dare say, considerable objection may be taken, and that is the provision giving power to the Crown to resume the pre-emptive right held by some pastoral tenants in Marlborough and Nelson.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Hear, hear.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—The honourable member says, "Hear, hear." Well, I have looked into this matter, and I can assure the honourable gentleman that I only came to the conclusion I have come to in the matter after very mature consideration. The position is this: Under the leases these people have got they can, during the next three years, render a large area of pastoral country completely useless to the Crown—that is, if they choose to exercise their right to purchase during the next three years—a right which they have got, and which I do not think should be taken from them without due consideration, and without giving them full value for whatever rights they hold.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Nothing is said in the Bill about compensation.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—There is nothing there about compensation, but reference is made to the Public Works Act, which will give them compensation. My own opinion is this: that the Crown should have the right of pre-emption in these cases. Those gentlemen have not the right to purchase at a certain price. Their right is in this way: They can claim that the land shall be put up for sale by public auction at a certain price, and any other person can compete against them for it. I think the Crown should be put in a position of being able to compete with them, and to purchase in cases where we find it necessary to do so: then we shall not be robbing them of any rights they have got. All they can do is, they can say, "We desire you should put up a certain area of our country at a certain upset price per acre, by public auction"; but there is nothing to compel us to give the land to them at that price; it is open to be competed for by any person who chooses to do so. Then, if the Crown is put in the position to purchase this after putting it up, they may be able to acquire such frontages as will preserve the Crown lands behind. These are the principal features of the Bill. I may say that, in my opinion, we may delay this matter, but we cannot delay it long. The necessity for it will force itself upon us whether we like it or not. Before the end of three years the leases in Marlborough and Nelson will be up, and before these leases expire it will be necessary for the House to deal with them; and the longer the matter is delayed, very likely the worse it will get, and the sooner we face the question to arrive at a solution the better it will be for the colony. The proper way is to give power to the Crown to exchange, and in a great many cases exchanges can be made which will be beneficial,

as I said before, to the present holders and to the Crown. Then, in some places it will be necessary, of course, to try to make good use of the back-country; or I should say this: It would be better to sell that back-country at a low price to the gentlemen who own the frontages, rather than keep it in the hands of the Crown to be a continual expense to us in keeping down the rabbits. At any rate, there must be some solution of the difficulty. I do not pretend to say that I am wise enough to know all about it, and I am quite prepared to take the assistance of any gentleman who knows anything about the subject, and who will assist me in arriving at a solution of the question. I hope the Bill will be allowed to pass the second reading to-night, and I will then submit it to the Waste Lands Committee, where every information in connection with it can be got, where the maps can be seen of the country which I refer to, and it can be shown beyond a doubt that the statements I have been making to-night to the House are correct and that we shall have a very large area of country which will be useless to us unless something is done in the matter. With regard to purchasing land for the purposes of small settlement in settled districts, I do not suppose any Minister occupying the position I occupy would in any way act in an arbitrary manner in regard to this matter. But I am certain if we had legislative authority to take the land compulsorily it would assist us materially, and very likely we should not have to use the compulsory clause at all. At any rate, that is my opinion, after having had twelve months' experience of the Act passed last session. I think if we had compulsory clauses we should be able to make arrangements to get all the land we require for settlement without putting the compulsory clauses into force at all; but, in my opinion, if we are to have proper settlement, and to obtain small holdings for people close to the towns, and in districts where working-men can be well employed, it is necessary to have some such power. I move the second reading, and I hope it will be passed; and the Bill will then be submitted to the Waste Lands Committee, where the whole subject will be properly threshed out.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I think, Sir, this Bill will have to be considerably altered in its passage through the House, for in its present form it is a Bill to promote Ministerial jobbery and robbery. That is the general purport of the Bill. The honourable gentleman said that if any honourable gentleman would give him the benefit of his advice he would be prepared to take it. I never knew the honourable gentleman to take any advice yet. He always says that, but he never fulfils his promise. We passed a Bill to-night in which he promised he would consider the amendments suggested by the honourable member for Inangahua, but the measure has gone through almost in the same condition as it was brought down in by the honourable gentleman. He has forced it through. With regard to this Bill, I may say I spoke on the original Land for Settle-

Mr. J. McKenzie

ments Bill: and, on the whole, I believe I am as favourable to settlement as the honourable gentleman, or any other honourable member; and when the Land for Settlements Bill went through the House before I said I thought it would be a proper thing to take land compulsorily where it was wanted. But I never contemplated this mode of taking land compulsorily. If you are to give the Minister power, at his own sweet will, to take such a piece of land as he may want anywhere and from anybody, it will lead to the grossest abuses. When you take lands for a public work under the Public Works Act you have got to consider that the work is a public work that has been authorised by Parliament, and therefore that the necessary steps must be taken to give effect to that work. You cannot go upon the general principle of taking land, and say particular blocks of land may be taken by the Minister that have not been authorised in any way by Parliament to be taken. The provision of the Public Works Act is,—

“A public work includes any survey, railway, tramway, road, street, bridge, drain, harbour, dock, canal, waterwork and mining work, electric telegraph, lighthouse, building, and every undertaking of what kind soever which the Government of the colony or any local authority is authorised to undertake under this or any other Act of the General Assembly or provincial ordinance.”

To give the Minister the power of compulsion, to use his own will as to what lands he will take, certainly is not a thing that was ever contemplated by this House, and I hope the House will not entertain it for a moment. There are certain areas of land—particularly in the South Island, where you want land for settlement—which can be purchased by the Government with the owners' consent, and we gave the Minister the power to acquire that land, and I venture to think if he had done what he ought to have done he would have bought some of that land. A good deal of that land which has been offered is cheaper at double the price than the Cheviot is, and it is close to lines of railway and roads, where you could put people at once, instead of taking them off to an outlying place forty miles away from a railway, and with which the only communication is by water. Well, Sir, the honourable gentleman has not seen fit to exercise the power in this direction, of buying voluntarily—that is, with the consent of the owners; and now he comes and asks the House to give him the general power of forcing people to sell or exchange, as he may think fit. I very much mistake if Parliament means that. We do not want the people to have to submit to injustice or confiscation: and we are just as anxious as the honourable gentleman can be to promote settlement. We will go to any reasonable extent in that direction, but this is utterly unreasonable. When he came to the question of the rights of Marlborough run-holders the honourable gentleman explained, very cursorily, the difficulty of taking land—that is, in a practical manner. We have no right to take this land, the rights and privileges

of which these people have acquired from the Crown,—land upon which they have put their money, and to which, therefore, they have a distinct right—we have no right to take away those rights without compensation, and I venture to say that the compensation would be very hard to assess, and that no good purpose would be served.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—What would you do with the back-country?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Are you going to put people there? I doubt it. And, if you do want it, you can take it under the proper system of compulsory land-taking—that is, by the will of Parliament, which will secure it from personal caprice. When you want to take such spots as are really required to promote settlement, you have to bring your proposals to Parliament, and Parliament consents to them. You do it by the will of the people. Sir, these great Liberals say, “Trust the people”; but the only thing the honourable member has to say is, “Trust the Minister of Lands.” I have not yet learnt—and it will take me a long time to learn—to trust the honourable gentleman. I believe he has very good intentions, but I think he has the most blundering way of giving effect to them of any man I have ever met. I say this Bill cannot possibly pass. I recommend the honourable gentleman, if it is read a second time—which I shall be sorry to see—to take it back and do what was done with a Bill the other day—cut it all out and renew the whole inside of it.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Sir, the last speaker is labouring under a misapprehension, because I do not think he has read the Bill. I speak subject to correction. The honourable gentleman talked about taking the land compulsorily under the Public Works Act. He knows that the Government cannot take lands under that Act unless they are properly adjudicated upon and valued.

Sir R. STOUT.—They can take them before they are adjudicated upon.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I do not know what my honourable friend calls adjudicated.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Have you read the Bill?

Mr. TAYLOR.—Yes, I have the Bill before me. My honourable friend talks about the blundering legislation of the Minister of Lands. I do not like to refer to some of the honourable gentleman's dealings when he was Minister of Lands. I say it is necessary in the interests of the people to establish in Canterbury facilities for settlement. The Minister should have the right to take these lands, so long as he pays a fair market price for them. I say he should have this power, if the land is required in the interests of the colony, and if he can pay the full value for it, and it is the right of the Crown to say, “We will have a fair market value placed on these lands.” I should like to ask the honourable member for Inangahua to deal with this Bill. I know very well that when he was Premier he admitted, on certain occasions, that it was necessary, in the interests of the colony, that the Crown should have power to take lands compulsorily.

Sir R. STOUT.—Yes, by a Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Then, why object to this Bill?

Sir R. STOUT.—I have not objected to the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I thought you were objecting to the measure; but I know very well, and the honourable gentleman knows very well, that there is no greater stickler for settlement than himself. He has always contended, throughout his whole political career, that if the interests of the people demand that certain land shall be obtained by the Government for settlement, and if the Government are prepared to pay a fair and honest price, they should have the right to take that land for settlement purposes. I am quite sure now, notwithstanding the assertions of the leader of the Opposition as to the blundering legislation of the Minister of Lands, that the Minister's name will go down to posterity as that of a gentleman who, at any rate, is doing his best in the interests of the colony to provide for the settlement of the people on the land. I did not intend to say a word on the Bill, and would not have done so except for the assertion of the leader of the Opposition. I think the remarks he made against the Minister of Lands were very discourteous. I believe that, as an administrator, the Minister is doing everything he can; and I am prepared to say that his administration of the lands of this colony will, at any rate, outshine that of the leader of the Opposition when he was Minister of Lands. It is all very well, of course, for the honourable gentleman to make these remarks, but I am bound to say that the object of the Bill seems to me to be a fair one and a just one. It is carrying out the policy, if I may say so without offence, of the honourable member for Inangahua when he was Premier of this colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No, it is not.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It is all very well for the honourable gentleman to say that, and to shake his head, but "circumstances alter cases." I have heard my honourable friend, when he was Premier, reiterate pretty well the remarks of the Minister of Lands with reference to taking these lands for settlement. If my honourable friend will tell me he has never stated that it is desirable in the interests of the people for the Government to resume lands, provided it pays for them fairly and honestly, in order to settle people on them—if the honourable member says he never said that, then I "give him best." I do not intend to say more about the Bill at present. I am quite sure the Minister of Lands is able to stand his ground, and the result of the honourable gentleman's administration will be evident to the colony in the course of the next twelve months, or perhaps before. When we go before the electors of the colony the honourable gentleman will be able to show that he is doing his best to assist settlement and to place the people on the land, and thereby to promote the interest of the colony at large.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, I cannot believe that the Minister is in earnest in his attempt to put

this Bill on the statute-book, and what his object may be in bringing it forward at present I cannot conceive, unless it be for electioneering purposes. If it be simply for electioneering purposes, I think he is going a little too far, because it will destroy confidence. Under this Bill no man is safe, as his property can be taken at the sweet will of the Minister. The Minister will have power placed in his hands that I think has never been placed before in the hands of any Minister, and which can be used for political purposes. A political opponent may be "spotted"; a political opponent may have the eyes picked out of his land at the sweet will of the Minister. Surely the Minister cannot intend to pass this Bill into law. With all the Crown lands we have available for settlement, with all the Native lands that may be made available for settlement, with the land that may be acquired under the present Land for Settlements Act, and with all the estates that are now offered for sale, surely there is no reasonable demand for this Bill. I do not see that any Bill of the kind is required at the present time, or will be required in the near future. Who is there in favour of introducing a Bill of this kind? If some pastoral lands of the Crown need some of the low lands to make them available for settlement, surely it is not right to deprive the owners of those lands—who have paid for them under the law—of their just rights.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—How about the back-country?

Mr. ALLEN.—Sell it, to compensate for the low-lying country. But it is not for me to enlighten the Minister of Lands. I object to being a party to confiscation. With regard to the 3rd clause, I question very much the right of the Government to pass a law of that kind—that property should be taken away from a man without any compensation whatever. Sir, this Bill cannot possibly pass.

Sir R. STOUT.—Sir, I consider this Bill is the most important Bill brought before the House this year, and it is of the greatest importance to this colony. To me the Bill is important because it seems to point out the utter failure of the freehold system of tenure. If this Bill becomes law in its present shape freehold is abolished. I cannot understand a Parliament that has practically refused to keep on the perpetual-lease system, and that refuses to introduce it into the Cheviot Bill of this year, accepting a Bill of this sort. If the freehold system means anything, it means that there shall be something like perpetuity in tenure; but this Bill utterly destroys that at once. Now, I do not know of any Bill that one can take for an argument in favour of the perpetual lease better than this Bill. Again I repeat, it shows that the freehold system is an utter failure. I admit the right of the State to take land for settlement if the State has no land for settlement. I admit that principle. I also admit this principle: If a man is beneficially occupying land, the State should not interfere with the beneficial occupation of such land. I do not like to refer to Bills that have failed

to get passed by Parliament, but I should ask the members of the House to refer to the Land Acquisition Bill brought down in 1887, and to see what were the principles laid down in that Bill, as compared with this Bill. What was the first principle laid down in that Bill? It was this: That land being the site of the dwellinghouse of the beneficial owners, and lands together not more than a thousand acres in extent around or adjacent thereto, also lands that could not be taken under the Public Works Act, and also if the owner had not more than a thousand acres could not be taken compulsorily. That is, you could not take away a man's home; and I say that this measure will allow the Government to take away a man's home, and that is not a right thing to do: it is a monstrous thing. I think that the limit that was put in the Bill of 1887 was a fair limit—namely, that, if a man had a thousand acres adjoining his home, that land could not be touched at all, and that, supposing he had another thousand acres which was not attached to his home, but which was not lying idle and unimproved, the Government should not be allowed to touch it at all. This is the way I look at the matter: Suppose any member of the House has a home in the country. He may have been there the whole of his life—for thirty, forty, or fifty years. All that time he has been improving that home. It is where his children were born. It is his dwelling-place, and he looks to his children occupying that home after him. I cannot understand the Government having the power of taking that home away from him and giving it to another man. Such an act as that would destroy all love for country life, which we want to encourage. It would destroy all love of home, and it would destroy every incentive to improve a man's property, if the Government could come down at any moment and take it away from him. The value may be, in his eyes, double the amount of the award which is given as compensation for it, and I think it would be a monstrous thing to take it away from him. Therefore, unless the Bill is amended in the direction of the Land Acquisition Bill of 1887, I cannot support it, though I am in favour of perpetual lease, and have been in favour of it for the last thirty years. I do not wish to see the tenure of land made anything but perpetual, and I desire to see our young men especially encouraged to make homes for themselves in the country districts, because I believe that the safety of our race physically depends upon that. But, if you do not give them security of tenure, where are you? You will not get anybody to go and spend his money upon the land he acquires, in the improvement of it, if the Government can come down and take it away from him by Proclamation, without giving him any notice whatever. The Proclamation may appear in the *Gazette* without his noticing it, and some morning, at his breakfast, perhaps, he may see that his farm of four or five hundred acres is gazetted. An Irish eviction is nothing to that. That is what this Bill means if it is passed, and I do

not agree with it. It is utterly wrong. I believe in the power to take land which is absolutely necessary for settlement.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—Look at section 2.

Sir R. STOUT.—What does it say? It says this:—

“In the event of any such owner refusing to sell or exchange, or on failure to come to an agreement with such owner in respect of the sale or exchange of, any land required for the aforesaid purposes, the Governor may take such land compulsorily, or so much thereof as he shall deem necessary, under ‘The Public Works Act, 1882,’ the provisions whereof shall apply to such taking as if it were a taking of land for a public work within the meaning of that Act; and the compensation to be paid for such taking shall be assessed in manner provided by that Act.”

The Government come to the owner and say, “We want your property at such a price.” He says, “No, I will not sell it.” What is the result of his refusal? Next day the *Gazette* notice comes, “You have got to clear out at a moment's notice.” Is that not worse than an Irish eviction or a Highland eviction? Why, Sir, it is monstrous. I do not agree with that at all. I say this: that the Minister should take the Land Acquisition Bill of 1887 for his guidance. It was not a perfect measure, but it laid down a great principle. It laid down the principle that in farming districts a man's farm was not to be touched; his home was not to be touched; his dwellinghouse was not to be touched; his plantations were not to be touched; his gardens were not to be touched; his orchards were not to be touched. All these things the Government were not to have the power to touch by any Proclamation. That was the principle contained in the Bill of 1887, and the same principle ought to be embodied in this Bill. The power here might be exercised in a very cruel and oppressive manner. We will suppose a Government was in office, and there was in a district a farmer who was very obnoxious, and he had only four hundred acres of land: the Government might say to him, “Will you sell us your farm? We will give you £4 an acre for it.” Wishing to retain it, the owner might say, “No, I will not; it is worth £14 an acre, and I will not sell it to you.” Well, what is the very next thing he hears about it? The very next morning that man's farm is gazetted, and it is taken from him. Such a thing as that is monstrous. I shall not vote against the second reading of the Bill, so long as the Minister is willing to amend it. I ask honourable members to refer to the Land Acquisition Bill of 1887, and there they will see that the power to take land was hedged round with all kinds of safeguards. I would sooner not have an acre of land in the colony open for settlement than have such a Bill as this upon the statute-book. A Bill like this would allow you to take a man's home, and that is utterly wrong. I do not live in the country, I live in the town; and should I like the Government to come and take my house from me? Why should I be placed in a differ-

ent position from a man who lives in a country district and is the owner of a farm? Such a Bill as this, if passed into law, would give a man no certainty of tenure. It would stop him from improving his land; it would destroy the love of home. I refer the Minister in charge of this Bill to one of the finest things, I think, Ruskin has written. He has pointed out that no nation becomes great until it has built stone houses. The builder must build a house not for himself only, but for his descendants. This Bill spoils that idea, by allowing the Government to say that a man shall have no home. I do hope the Minister will look at that Bill of 1887, and that he will say, when he comes to reply, that he is willing to put in those limitations and safeguards which are contained in that Bill, for if that is not done I shall oppose the Bill to the best of my ability.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I entirely agree with the honourable member for Inangahua in what he has said. If I differ from him on any point at all it is on one in which, it appears to me, he overlooked the dangers that would arise from the passing of such a Bill as this. The honourable gentleman said that this was a Bill which destroyed the value of freehold, and which at the same time went in the direction of encouraging perpetual leases. With the first half of that statement I entirely agree: it completely destroys the value of freehold. But I wish to draw the honourable gentleman's attention to a point which, I think, in the able analysis which he made of this Bill, he overlooked—namely, that the destruction of freehold which arises out of such a Bill as this, which I may here characterize as one of the most dangerous, most immoral, and most extraordinary that I have ever known to be introduced—is also accompanied by the same danger to the perpetual lease.

Sir R. STOUT.—No; perpetual leases cannot be taken under this Bill.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Not under this particular Bill. But I would ask the honourable gentleman to consider this: What is the value of a perpetual lease, or a lease in perpetuity, introduced by a Government that would propose to tamper in this way with people's freehold properties? What is to prevent a Bill from being brought in to destroy a lease in perpetuity, and to resume possession of the lands? There is nothing to prevent it. It is just as easy in the one case as in the other. Every day of our lives, every session we have been here, we have seen legislation under which people, under the laws made or administered by the present Government, have been acquiring freeholds. But these freeholds, as soon as they are acquired, can be destroyed under such a Bill as this. At one moment the Government grant the right to purchase land, they receive payment for it, and then they bring in a Bill under which they are empowered to compulsorily take that land back again. There can be no permanency in any form of tenure as long as Bills like this are allowed to pass the Legislature. Now, Sir, what the honourable member for Inangahua said about

the Land Acquisition Bill is perfectly true so far as the rights of the individual were concerned. That was, by comparison with this, a fair Bill. If my memory serves me, the reason that measure was thrown out, or was allowed to lapse, was that it was thought it gave powers to the Government which might lead to corruption; but it was never held that it was dangerous to the individual holder of land. It was a comparatively fair Bill to the individual, but it was a moot point at the time whether the Bill did not place in the hands of the Government powers that might be improperly used. Now, with regard to this Bill, the objections to it have been very clearly and succinctly stated to-night. I have no doubt the intentions of the Minister of Lands are excellent; but he lacks a certain historical knowledge calculated to make the individual put a just value upon rights and liberties that should not be at the command of any Government. That sort of knowledge I do not think he has got, and he seems to me always perfectly ready to rest satisfied with his own good intentions, and never to look at the evils that might arise from a system quite apart from the individual in office. It has been said that this Bill will enable the Government to exercise a most dangerous influence over their fellow-men. The honourable member for Inangahua has stated the position with perfect justice. At a general election, with such a measure as this on the statute-book, no farmer—no settler in the honourable gentleman's own district, we will take it—would feel secure. He represents a district full of small farmers. At an election there is not a farmer who would feel himself safe. I am not now saying that we must necessarily assume that the Minister would act in an unjust way towards any man; but if the Minister held over a man a dangerous power which could be exercised at any moment under the law, and which would mean absolute ruin to him if exercised, that man could hardly be a free agent. He would say to himself, "If I vote against this Government or against this man my farm may be taken for settlement."

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—I can easily cure that.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I only hope the honourable gentleman may not attempt the cure when it is too late.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Amend the Bill.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—There is only one way of amending it: Take the compulsory clause out of it. I cannot conceive a Legislature so immoral as to pass a Bill of this kind. There is not a creature in the country who holds land who will for an instant be safe; and the Government which conceives it is right to take land under this Bill could take any other form of property it chooses. Why not take a newspaper? Why not say, "The newspapers of this country are all on one side; we want an organ of our own. Let us bring in a Bill which will enable us to make an offer to the proprietor to sell his newspaper and plant; and, if he will not sell, we can get a value placed on it, and take it from him?"

Sir R. Stout

Mr. REEVES.—Absolutely delightful!

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Yes, no doubt it would be delightful to the honourable gentleman, who has always been connected with very bad newspapers; and I dare say persons who hold bad land would also be extremely pleased to get rid of that at a price. As the honourable member for Inangahua properly stated, if this Bill had had reference to blocks of land which were held in large areas by one man, although even then the principle is a more or less dangerous one, and calculated to spoil the sense of security every man should have in his property, nevertheless I could have said there was some appearance of justice in the case. It might be considered, under such circumstances, that the extent of land held was a source of loss or danger to the public or to a portion of the community—that it was against public policy that so much land should be held by one man; but to bring in a Bill which empowers the Minister, at his own will, to go to a man's farm—to go to a farm of four, five, or six hundred acres—and to say to the owner of that farm, "Will you sell me this land for such-and-such a price?" and, when he says it is worth a great deal more, to give the Minister a power which enables him to gazette the spoliation of that man's land, and take it absolutely from him without more ado, I say is one of the most dangerous and immoral propositions I have ever known introduced into this House. I scarcely believe that the Bill is intended to be passed. I cannot help thinking that there is some ulterior object in it. All I can say is that, if that is the case, the Minister has done a great deal of mischief already in allowing the people of New Zealand to believe that he is prepared to bring in such a Bill as this at any other time. As regards the difficulty of getting land under the Act of last year, or under provisions similar to those contained in the Bill which the honourable member for Inangahua mentioned—the Land Acquisition Bill of 1887—I have no hesitation in saying, from my knowledge of country matters, that the statement of the Minister that it was a difficult matter cannot be accepted by any individual who knows anything about the country at all. I have no hesitation in saying that there are tens of thousands of acres which could be purchased at the property-tax value under the Bill of last year. I do not know whether this House is yet in possession of the offers the Government have had.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Yes; it is on the table.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—That, of course, will help to enlighten us; but I am sure that there are tens of thousands of acres in the southern portions of the colony—I cannot answer for the North—for which the owners would very willingly accept the property-tax value, or, at any rate, the ordinary market value. But, whether it is so or not, I agree with the honourable member for Inangahua that it is better for the people of the country that the State should not at the moment be able to acquire the land than to have such

a law. I have every confidence, however, that it will come back from the Waste Lands Committee a better Bill—one which we can probably vote for. If the compulsory clauses be taken out there is no harm in the Bill. If the Bill loses the compulsory part of it I see no harm in it; and I think the provision which enables the Minister to make a contract with an individual to exchange one piece of land for another which may be required for public purposes is a good one, and might work well; but the compulsory part of the Bill renders the measure extremely dangerous. It would do an infinite amount more of mischief to the community by being placed on the statute-book than the land taken under the Bill would do the country good.

Mr. MEREDITH.—If the provisions of this Bill are considered too drastic, they can be modified so as to meet the approval of the House. I hold the opinions of the honourable member for Inangahua in great deference; but I think the picture held up by the honourable gentleman of the probable effects of this Bill was rather overdrawn. I do not consider the scope or purport of this Bill is in the direction which the honourable gentleman indicated. This Bill I regard as a necessity in consequence of the gridironing system which has obtained in many parts of the colony, more particularly in the South Island; and I look upon the present Bill as a supplement to the Land for Settlements Act introduced last session. The provisions of this Bill might have been embodied in the Act of 1892. It is a fact that the different Land Boards experience the greatest difficulty at the present time in dealing with Crown lands let on lease in consequence of the absence of such a provision as is embodied in this Bill. Take the Crown lands in the Timaru district, at Burke's Pass, Hakateramea, *et cetera*: the Canterbury Land Board experiences the greatest difficulty in finding sufficient land to give room for homestead sites for the working of small grazing-runs. And I think this matter has been brought under the notice of the Minister, so that he has not acted solely on his own impulse, but rather he has been influenced by pressure brought to bear upon him arising out of the practical knowledge of the difficulties in administration of the lands of the Crown by the various Land Boards. Within the next three years the leases of two million acres of Crown lands will terminate. This land will come into the hands of the Government, and will have to be dealt with. These leases will terminate about 1896, and the land will revert to the Crown. I should like to point out to the House that the leases referred to in clause 5 of this Bill were made by the Provincial Councils of Nelson and Marlborough, and were made by the very same men who occupy those runs at the present time; and those runs have been largely gridironed, and every piece of available level land, including the valleys, suitable for homestead sites has been taken up. The consequence is that only the back-country and the steep spurs of the

mountain-ranges are available, so that, practically, when these runs revert to the Crown they will be of little use if taken up by others than the present tenants. It is a matter of necessity that the Minister should have the power to acquire portions of land so as to be able to work the runs which will revert to the Crown in the Provinces of Marlborough and Nelson. The Midland Railway Company, again, has disposed of, to one person, 16,000 acres in one block; in another instance, 40,000 acres; and in another instance, 80,000 acres, in the Provinces of Canterbury and Marlborough; and yet, if the Government want five or ten thousand acres, with the view of cutting it up for settlement, they cannot get it from the railway company under existing legislation. Therefore, I say, there is a necessity for this Bill. If it be too drastic it can be modified in Committee. I do not think the intention of the Bill is in the direction indicated by the honourable member for Inangahua—to interfere with small holdings. If it were in that direction I should oppose it; but I believe the purport of the Bill is as I have stated it, and, as such, I think it ought to pass its second reading and go to the Committee. No doubt the Minister will see the necessity for some modification in the direction pointed out by honourable members.

Mr. MCGUIRE.—I look upon this Bill as a very dangerous measure. I think the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill should pause before he goes any further with it. I also think he would be acting in the interests of the colony if he withdrew it altogether. The country is unsettled enough at the present time, in consequence of unnecessary legislation; and our financial affairs are unsettled also, and I assure honourable members that something should be done to instil more confidence in the country. Acts of Parliament of this class only unsettle it.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—Make the roads in Taranaki.

Mr. MCGUIRE.—It cannot be denied that the Minister, who has just interrupted me, is not doing the right thing, after placing settlers on the land, in turning his back upon them. I think it is very unkind indeed of the Minister to leave these settlers as they are. I do not think it is creditable to the Minister that he should place people upon the land and leave them there without roads. According to this Bill, if it suits the Minister he can take land from one farmer and give it to another. It is a system of robbing Peter to pay Paul. We have a large quantity of Crown lands crying out for settlement. Why cannot we get these lands settled as quickly as possible? What is the necessity for purchasing land at the present time? If things do not progress, and prices do not increase, there will be any quantity of land which the Minister will be able to get at a very low price indeed. We know very well from past experience that individuals, and companies, and banks have come to grief through purchasing land, and I hope the Government are not going to undertake too much in that re-

spect, and bring the country to grief. Since I have come to this House we have had unnecessary Bills introduced—measures which are doing very great damage to the country. If a few well-considered Bills were brought in every year it would be more in the interests of the country generally. I cannot imagine what force is behind the Government that is inducing them to introduce some of the measures which they have brought down during this and previous sessions. There must be some very strong force behind them to induce them to introduce such an ill-considered measure as this. I am perfectly certain this Bill cannot be cured or amended in Committee, for it is like the Irishman's gun, which required a new lock, stock, and barrel; and, in the interests of the country, I shall have to vote against the second reading.

Mr. MOORE.—I have always expressed myself in the direction that the Crown should have the right to resume land where it is necessary for the purposes of settlement in the same way as they are able to take land under the Public Works Act for public works. But certain safeguards should be imposed in connection with such taking of land. This Bill simply gives power to the Minister for the time being to take any land he may feel disposed to take, without any check whatever. The fact is that there is only one good clause in the Bill; perhaps I might say that one clause and part of another are good. The good clause is the title: the Land for Settlements Act Amendment Act. That may be looked upon as a good title, and it may be a very taking one to place before the public; but when we go into the Bill we find that it is a very drastic measure indeed. The other part of a clause which may be looked upon as something like reasonable is that in regard to the purpose for which land may be taken. I do not think that any one will object to the purpose for which the land is to be taken. But outside that the Bill is a bad one from top to bottom. I should be well pleased to vote for a measure which would be in the direction of the settlement of the land, and to give the Minister reasonable power to acquire land for settlement; but I am afraid if we place the power that is given in the Bill in the hands of the Minister we may find it to work very great mischief throughout the country. The Minister said, if the Bill were passed with the compulsory clauses in it, that that would be sufficient to induce people to sell land to the Minister without putting the compulsory clauses into force; but I think that is very doubtful, and, at any rate, it is a great power to place in the hands of a Minister without safeguards surrounding the compulsory clauses, and I think the House should object to give any Minister such a power. The Minister said that if the power were placed in his hands it was not likely to be used unfairly. We have had some experience of Ministers taking powers, perhaps not so much as this, and in their case I am afraid they might not use them fairly, and I am opposed to placing power in any Minister's

Mr. Meredith

hands—I do not say particularly the present Minister's hands, but any Minister's—to take land under such an Act as this. It appears to me that the Minister has made up his mind that he must get land for settlement, and that this is a very short cut indeed whereby he may obtain what he wishes to obtain. Then, Sir, there is clause 3, under which the Government may prohibit the sale of pastoral land in the Nelson and Marlborough Districts, and there is no provision for compensation whatever. Notwithstanding any right that may be acquired by or may have accrued to an owner, or that a lessee under license may hold from the Crown, the Minister will be able to take this land for settlement purposes without giving the slightest compensation. It certainly appears to me, if any right has accrued, that the person who has the right should have some compensation if that right is taken away from him. I care not whether it is taken by the Minister, by the House, or by a private individual, it is certainly unfair and unreasonable to expect that any person who has acquired a right under the law of the land should have that right taken away without the slightest compensation. The Minister, I think, when he replies, should state definitely whether he is prepared to place safeguards in the Bill, so that there shall be no fear of land being taken from a person without his being fairly compensated for it, in the first place, and without sufficient being left for his own use. A man may be occupying a small section of land of from three hundred to five hundred acres, and there is nothing in the Bill to prevent the Minister from taking every acre he has simply for the purpose of handing it over to somebody else. There is nothing reasonable in it, so far as I can see; and, unless the Minister can say he is prepared to have it amended and placed under reasonable safeguards, I shall vote against it.

Mr. FISH.—I rise simply for the purpose of saying that I intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill if a division is called for. My principal reason for so doing is that it appears to me that this Bill, as now presented to us, utterly destroys any security of tenure. If we are going to pass Bills of this kind, so that a man shall be unable to say that his land is his own,—and I maintain that it has no other meaning than that,—then it is time we should pause before we pass such legislation. It appears to me, Sir, that this Bill will give any Government the power of saying to an individual, whether he likes it or not, that he shall give up land which is his own, and on which he sets a special value; and that, I think, is going too far altogether. I presume that by subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section 2 there was an intention of limiting the acquisition of land to certain purposes; but I think, on reading the Bill through, there is nothing to prevent the Minister from going altogether beyond these subsections, and I think that would be giving him a very dangerous power altogether. I am quite with him, or with any section of the House which goes in the direction of acquiring

for settlement land which is held by any person in large quantities, and is not being utilised for the good of the colony. I am quite with him or them in any legislation of that kind. But this Bill appears to me to go altogether too far, and to be most dangerous to the country. There is nothing more dear to the British people than the possession of a piece of land which they can call their own, and which when they have once acquired they should be able to say cannot be taken from them for any purpose whatever without their consent, except for purposes of public utility. If this Bill is passed there seems to me to be no security of tenure whatever. In passing legislation of this kind we must not consider whether the particular Minister who introduces the legislation will carry it out quite fairly and properly or not. That is not what we have to consider. We have to consider whether in the Bill itself there is power given to a Minister by which, if he chooses, he can act unjustly. That is the thing we ought to guard against. And it appears to me that under the Bill the Minister might do almost anything he liked. There is another danger to be apprehended from the passing of a measure such as this, and that is that persons who hold land which they may fancy may come under the purview of the Minister under the powers given by the Bill would, in times of election, feel themselves to be powerless; they would be afraid to exercise their freedom of speech or opinion. If they proved obnoxious to the Government at an election-time, that it might perhaps damage them very materially seems quite possible, knowing that the Minister could wreak his vengeance on the unfortunate freeholder in a most unfair way. There are, apparently, so far as I can see, as the last speaker remarked, no safeguards of any kind in the Bill. I understand that a Bill was presented to Parliament by the honourable member for Inangahua some years ago of a somewhat similar character; but that Bill, if I recollect aright, was safeguarded in every possible direction, and there was clear provision in it, if I remember rightly, that what the real intentions of the Government were should be stated, and they were limited to these specifically. In this Bill there seems to me to be no safeguard of any kind, and I hold that it is a dangerous measure to pass.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was understood to say that the Bill to which the honourable gentleman had just referred did not pass.

Mr. FISH.—That, I believe, is the case, and goes to show that, if the House did not pass that Bill, which was a more reasonable one than this, it should not pass this one. My honourable friend has a thorough belief in the honesty of his intentions, and so have I; but he seems to forget that, whilst he may be perfectly honest in his administration, there may come a time when some other Minister not so honest as he is may occupy the office he now holds; and, although he himself will act quite fairly in getting this land for the Government, his department may pass into other hands not

so honest, and if we pass the legislation he is now endeavouring to pass that Minister may use the powers given under this Bill in a very unjust and unfair manner. Now, I should like to hear the Government supporters speak on this question. I feel certain there must be a number of the Government supporters who have considerable objections to the Bill, and they ought to state them boldly on the floor of the House. This is not a measure which the Government binds its existence as a Government upon, and, if any of their supporters have a strong opinion that the Bill goes in a wrong direction, I think it is their bounden duty to their constituents and to the country to speak out with no uncertain sound. To do so would only be to carry out their functions fairly, and it would not be prejudicial to the prestige of the Government. I trust if there are any in the Chamber at the present time amongst the Government supporters who hold this Bill to be going in a wrong direction they will, in the interests of the colony, let us know what their opinions are.

Mr. HARKNESS.—I rise to say a few words on the Bill in the interests of the district which I have the honour to represent, and I shall be as brief as possible. I find, Sir, that the principle of this Bill is to abolish entirely the freehold: there is no question about that. When you take that fact in conjunction with the remarks that fell from the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill, there is no guarantee whatever that, in carrying out the principle of the Bill, he will not act arbitrarily. There can be no question that the principle of the Bill is to do away with the freehold qualification; and when we take into consideration the fact that "The Land Act, 1892," contains the eternal lease for 999 years—which we regard as a freehold—it seems rather a strange proceeding on the part of the Minister, after having accorded a freehold of the character referred to, that he should endeavour, by the measure now before us, to abolish the freehold. I regret, Sir, to say that the honourable member for Ashley is always prepared to swallow every measure the Government introduces to the House; but I am glad to know that he is now inclined to follow the honourable member for Inangahua, and I believe that in following in his footsteps, at all events in connection with the land question, he is following one who is more liberal in his principles in regard to land-legislation than the present Government appear to be. I admit that in certain districts it is absolutely necessary that the State should acquire property; but it is not right that the State should act unjustly to those now holding that property, and for this reason I wish to point out as briefly as possible the provisions of this 3rd clause, which apply to Nelson and Marlborough. It states, here,—

"Notwithstanding any right accrued or reserved to any lessee or licensees of pastoral land under 'The Nelson Crown Lands Leasing Act, 1867,' or 'The Marlborough Waste Lands Act, 1867,' to purchase such land or any part thereof, the Governor, by notification in the *Gazette*,

Mr. Fish

may declare any such land to be required for any of the purposes mentioned in section two of this Act."

Now, Sir, I maintain that if that means anything at all it means that the Minister of Lands is prepared to rob the lessees of their rights. He is prepared to rob them of the rights they possess under the Provincial Acts, — which were abolished by the Act of 1892, and without compensation. I say that is exceedingly wrong. They have rights which should be regarded, and provision should be made to give them compensation. I hope that when this Bill is referred to the Waste Lands Committee it will be dealt with in such a way that very little of it will be left but its title, and that four new clauses will be drafted which will be more in harmony with the views of this House.

Mr. HALL-JONES.—Sir, I do not think it will be necessary to take up very much time in debating this Bill, as it is to be referred to the Waste Lands Committee; but I must say I am surprised at the quarters from which the opposition to this Bill has come. First, from the leader of the Opposition: I should have thought that no one would have known better than he himself how urgently land was required for settlement in South Canterbury. I am sorry that the honourable member for Geraldine has been called away upon urgent business, and that he is not here to tell that honourable gentleman how important it is that land should be acquired for settlement in the district he represents. I have no hesitation in saying that in the electorate which you, Sir, have the honour to represent, and in that of Geraldine, and especially of Timaru, there are hundreds of men who are willing and anxious to take up land in small areas under the Land for Settlements Act. Unfortunately, the Act of last year contains no compulsory power for the acquisition of land, and it is almost impossible to acquire land at a fair price under its provisions. A large quantity of land was offered to the Government, but in most cases it was either unsuitable for settlement, or the value placed upon the land was so high that the Government could not purchase. I was sorry to hear what fell from the honourable member for Inangahua when he gave an illustration of what might happen under this Bill, because I expected something better from him. He told us that it might be the case that people owning small freeholds of three or four hundred acres, who had improved the land and made a home for themselves, would be liable to have their homes taken from them under this Bill. I am sure there is no intention on the part of the present Minister to do such a thing, and I hope no future Minister would attempt to act in so arbitrary a manner. What is required in this Bill is some such provision as was contained in the Land for Settlements Bill introduced by the Minister in 1891. Clause 9 reads as follows:—

"The following lands may not be compulsorily acquired:—

"(1.) Any parcel of land the property of a

person not the beneficiary owner of more than two thousand acres, unless the same be waste or unimproved land.

"(2.) Land being the site of a dwellinghouse of the beneficiary owner, and lands around or adjacent thereto, the whole area together not exceeding two thousand acres.

"(3.) Lands mentioned in 'The Public Works Act, 1882,' as not to be taken thereunder."

If this provision were included in the present Bill, I think the objections raised by its opponents would be met. The honourable member for Mount Ida asks, if we can take land under this measure, why could we not, under a similar Bill, take anything else?—why not, for instance, take a newspaper? Well, Sir, newspapers are easily started in any part of the country. It is simply a question of pounds, shillings, and pence. But there is no analogy between the two. For instance, it would not be an easy matter to increase the area of land in New Zealand, say, by five thousand or ten thousand acres. I should like the Minister to consider whether, when the Bill is before the Waste Lands Committee, he could not make the values attaching to the lands to be the same values as declared by the owner in his land-tax valuation. I think if the lands were taken on this valuation, with a fair percentage—anything you like, 5 or 10 or even 20 per cent.—sufficient to cover the full value of the land, and making allowance for its being a forced sale, it would work well. It must be remembered that this Bill is only intended to apply to large estates. Another important matter I should like him to consider is the constitution of the Board. There are two gentlemen, officers of the State,—the Commissioner of Taxes and the Surveyor-General,—who have many other important things to attend to: in fact, their duties are at present so large that they cannot, I believe, properly attend to the work imposed upon them in this Bill. I think it would be very much better if the Board were a local Board. I do not see why the Waste Land Board should not deal with this question. As this Bill has to go before the Waste Lands Committee, it will no doubt be altered there, and if the clause of the Bill of 1891 is included in this Bill I think all the objections raised will be met. I shall vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—I will not detain the House two minutes, Sir, in saying a few words, because, at this hour of the night, and considering the temper of the House, a long speech is somewhat out of place. But I wish to place on record my earnest conviction that this is not only one of the most important Bills of the session, but it may be made, perhaps, the most valuable. I entirely agree with what has fallen from the honourable member for Timaru, and I cannot conceive how any Canterbury member can stand up and say anything different from what he has said. The need for a Bill of this sort in our part of New Zealand is a crying one, and it is a need that will not disappear in a few months or in a few years. Unless a

Bill of this kind is passed, and put into operation, and used fearlessly, that need will go on increasing and increasing until a much more revolutionary measure than this may come to be clamoured for. A very eloquent appeal has been made to the House to protect the sanctity of a man's home; and with that I entirely agree. But the House must remember that this Bill is to enable large numbers of people as years go on to make homes for themselves who otherwise would be pent up in the great towns of the colony, and would never be likely to get for themselves homes worthy to be called by the name. I agree entirely that in purchasing land for settlement we should respect the sanctity of a man's home, but I altogether fail to see that there is any danger that a measure of this kind would be levelled against that sacred possession. From the point of view of mere business, the absurdity of the State going out of its way to purchase a home, with its purlieus and improvements, which would be useless for cutting up, and for which the State would have to pay three or four times the amount of money that would be paid for useful land—I say, the absurdity of that is so striking that I cannot conceive how such a thing could ever be imagined. However, if it is thought advisable to accompany this Bill with any reasonable safeguards I can see no objection to putting them in. The only objections that have been urged are, after all, but Committee objections. I have no objection to putting safeguards into any Bill, even a Licensing Bill; but I do think that this Bill—

Sir R. STOUT.—The land is not to be taken by a vote of three-fifths.

Mr. REEVES.—If not a penny of compensation was to be paid to the owner, then I think we should have to have a three-fifths majority. It certainly amuses me to hear one honourable gentleman on the Opposition benches to-night dwell upon the wickedness of confiscating property by a process which is taking from a man a certain amount of property while you give him the full value of the same in return, when I remember that that honourable gentleman is in favour of legislation which virtually takes from a large class of people the right to make use of their property without giving them a penny in return. I am inclined to think his views of confiscation are rather mixed. I think the State has a perfect right to take from the owners of the class of property to which I am referring—I am referring to licensees—I consider the State has a right to take their property away without virtually paying them any compensation, provided it is under certain safeguards. But as regards property of this kind—land on which improvements are made—that should never be taken away from any man unless he is paid every penny of the full value for it. And let the taking be surrounded with reasonable safeguards. Some honourable members do not appear to realise the crying need there is for the acquisition of lands for settlement in that part of the colony which constitutes the larger half of New Zealand.

Honourable members of the North Island should not look on a Bill of this kind from the point of view of their own districts. Such a land-law may not be wanted in their districts now, but it is impossible for them to tell when their turn may not come in the days of the future. I can remember the time, Sir, when in Canterbury such a measure as this would have been laughed out of existence. Some twelve or fifteen years ago nobody dreamed that such a need could ever arise in Canterbury. But now even a majority of three-fifths would vote enthusiastically for this Bill if it were remitted to the public vote, because experience has taught them the necessity of it. I have simply risen to express my approval of this most important measure, and to point out the great necessity for its passing. It may not pass both Houses of Parliament this session. I hope it will; but, if it does not, it will pass both Houses of Parliament before even one more session has gone over our heads. For my own part, if I should be fortunate enough to remain in public life, I should think it the most important duty of my life to get a Bill like this passed.

MR. WRIGHT.—Sir, a Bill providing for the acquisition of land for settlement is no doubt required, but not a Bill such as this. Very much has been said by the last speaker, and by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, about inserting safeguards to protect individual rights. But there are no such safeguards in this Bill—none whatever. The honourable gentleman, in introducing the Bill, spoke very fairly; and if we had in the measure nothing more than his present intentions we might perhaps have agreed to them. But the expressed intentions of the honourable gentleman and the provisions of this Bill are two very different matters. The provisions of this Bill are simply confiscation of private rights. If he would be content with the first portion of section 2, which provides for negotiations for the acquisition of this land, it might have passed to-night; but the compulsory clauses are such as this House is not disposed to trust any Government with. The honourable gentleman taunted the honourable member for Taranaki with wanting money for the Taranaki roads. I would ask that honourable gentleman if he knows what his colleague is doing by way of expending money on roads in other parts of the colony—not roads like those near Stratford, which are so impassable that bullocks have to wade through over their backs in mud. Thousands of pounds are being expended in so-called improvements upon roads that are already excellent roads without further improvement. It is, Sir, a perfect waste of money. I do not wish, in the absence of the Minister for Public Works, to dwell on this matter, but I will take another occasion for doing so. Whilst certain portions of this colony are crying out for a few thousand pounds to improve their roads, many thousands are being absolutely thrown away in other works which are quite unnecessary. Now that the Minister of Lands has heard the discussion on this

Mr. Reeves

Bill, he must be aware that it is not likely to pass in its present form. I would therefore suggest that this debate should now be adjourned, in order that he may have time to reconsider it fully, and bring it down in a form more acceptable to the House. It is quite on a par with several other Bills that have emanated from the Minister of Lands—ill-considered Bills, which the House has had to reduce to mere skeletons, they being quite unworkable measures as introduced. If a little more time were given to the consideration of necessary measures of this kind during the recess, the House would not be called upon now to waste so much time in discussing and trying to amend ill-considered and badly-drafted Bills. I shall move that the debate be now adjourned, whether the motion is carried or not. In any case it will give the Minister an opportunity of reconsidering its provisions, and bringing down an amended Bill which might have some chance of passing. I admit the necessity for some Bill to deal with the acquisition of lands for settlement, but not on these lines.

MR. LAKE.—I shall not detain the House a minute in seconding the motion for adjournment. I can only say that we have had to-night to carry a Bill through all its stages, and I can imagine nothing that could happen to make such a Bill necessary more than the distrust and alarm likely to be created by this Bill.

MR. J. MCKENZIE.—I object to the adjournment. I ask the House not to adjourn the debate, but to give me the opportunity of replying to the speeches that have been made, and I shall be able to show honourable members that they are very far out in their views of this Bill.

MR. CARNCROSS.—I am sorry the honourable gentleman has moved the adjournment of the debate, because I really think it will lead to a waste of time. There are some parts of the Bill that I cannot see my way to support, but I recognise that my objections are Committee objections, and, seeing that the Bill has to go to the Waste Lands Committee, we may very well let it pass the second reading and go to the Committee, and there is very little doubt that it will come back in a different shape. The House is pretty well tired, and is anxious to get away; but I think the honourable gentleman would be consulting the wishes of honourable members if he could see his way to withdraw the amendment, and let the Bill go to the Waste Lands Committee, to be debated when it comes back again.

MR. BUICK.—I regret the honourable gentleman has moved the adjournment of the debate. There are some of us who have been waiting till this late hour anxious to speak on the merits of the Bill. Besides, a large number have made speeches against it, and it is rather unfair to the Minister to have the right of reply to those speeches denied to him now. I hope this amendment will not be agreed to.

The House divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 11.

Allen	Mitchelson	Stout.
Buckland	Moore	<i>Tellers.</i>
Earnshaw	Richardson	Lake
Mackenzie, M.	Rollleston	Wright.

NOES, 21.

Blake	Lawry	Tanner
Cadman	McGowan	Taylor
Carroll	McKenzie, J.	Thompson, T.
Fraser	McLean	Ward.
Guinness	Palmer	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hall-Jones	Saunders	Buick
Hogg	Smith, W. C.	Meredith.
Kelly, J.		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Buchanan	Duncan
Fish	Reeves
Harkness	Mills, C. H.
Mackenzie, T.	Smith, E. M.
Swan	Rhodes
Valentine	Willis
Wilson.	O'Connor.

Majority against, 10.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I am not going to speak at any length on this Bill at present, as it will have to come back from the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Nothing can be done with it there.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—Well, I would point out to the Minister and to the House and to the country that there must be some limit to this resumption of private land by the Government; and I would ask the question, Where is this going to stop? I do not object, to a certain extent, to the Government buying land from private people; but where is it to stop? I am not by any means satisfied that putting these settlers on country land is going to be a success except where it is close to the towns; and I believe very largely in settlement taking its own course. Supposing you settle the whole of New Zealand with a certain class of settlers under this Bill, are the people who come afterwards to say, "Now, we will take the whole of the land from you and subdivide it into ten- and twenty-acre lots"? If we are going to do this we shall lose all settling on land in this country; we shall lose all incentive to go on the land. Who is going to take up land if he knows that directly he gets it in order, and makes it fit to live on, for a home to be proud of, it is going to be disposed of to four or five men hanging on to the coat-tails of Ministers in towns, or for the purpose of getting a few votes? If it comes to that—that we are to be put out for the purpose of favouring a few who are clamouring for land in the way they do for work, who never mean to go on the land or to do the work—if you are going to do this, I say you will stop the feeling of the people for the country, and they will not go on the land; you will deal a death-blow at the country, and it will take years to undo what we may do in a day. And it is not

required. If the Government want to buy land they can acquire it without this Bill. Who would be safe? The true settlement is done by those who go out into the country, not into the smooth fenced-in country near the towns, but into the rough country, and bring it into subjection: and then it is to be taken from them and given to a lot of people who are sitting down in the cities waiting till it is broken in and prepared for them. I hope it will never happen in the colony. I hope the Minister will take away the compulsory part of the Bill. If he only tried he could get plenty of land now to take up—more than he can possibly purchase. I would say to him, "Do not go to this extreme." What is it for? Is it because we are going to have elections, or what, in Heaven's name, is it for?

Mr. BUICK.—I quite agree with the honourable member for Inangahua that this is one of the most important Bills that have come before the House this session. Anything dealing with the question of land-settlement, particularly with the question of the compulsory taking of land, must be a matter of extreme moment to the people of the country, and we should take care that we do nothing to destroy the feeling of security which our settlers ought to have in regard to their homes. It is quite true, as the honourable gentleman said, that certain associations and affections grow up round a place, and a person who has lived in it year after year has feelings for which no sum of money could compensate if he were deprived of it, and it would be exceedingly hard if the Government could step in suddenly and take away the whole of what he had acquired after years of toil. Still, at the same time, the honourable gentleman in so illustrating his case took a very extreme view of the matter, because it is altogether unreasonable to suppose that any Government is going to step in and pursue such an arbitrary course as that, and no Government would dare to do it. If this Bill, as I believe it does, gives them power to do so, I think it would be wise, not only in the interests of the settlement of the country, but in the interests of the Government themselves, to so safeguard the measure that nothing of the kind could occur. As I understand it, the principle of the Bill is simply this: that private interests shall not interfere with public interests, and that where it is necessary that a Government should take land for settlement they should have the right and the power to do so. That, I think, is a perfectly just course to take under certain circumstances. I, for one, would never consent to any Government having power to rob the people of their land justly bought and justly earned. I am no friend of confiscation in any shape or form. I think, Sir, it is a matter for regret that the existing Land for Settlements Act has not proved the success which we had a right to expect it would. For this reason, with certain reservations, I am entirely in favour of this Bill; but when it comes back from the Waste Lands Committee, if it does not contain the safeguards which I think are

necessary, I shall consider it my duty to oppose it, although my district is suffering as much as any district in the colony for the want of some such measure as this. It is not that we have not land fit for settlement: we have a great deal of land fit for settlement, but it was parted with in the early days for a mere song, and now when it is wanted it is impossible to get it. The present owners are unapproachable, either because they are indisposed to sell the land, or because they want such an extortionate figure for it that it is really impossible for a man of small means to acquire even the smallest portion of it. That condition of affairs has not only retarded the progress of the province, but it has denuded it of young men who were anxious to make homes for themselves, and, more than that, it has kept back public works from being constructed in our province. At the present time we have a railway partially formed which is now practically stopped for the simple reason that if it were constructed it simply would mean giving an increased value to private property to an enormous extent. This is effectually blocking settlement, and we see no small farms in that part of the district where small farms ought to exist; so that a measure of this kind is absolutely necessary before we can get any settlement or any progress in our province. Further than that, as the Minister has truly stated, we have large portions of high country with a narrow strip of freehold as frontage. The settlers, of course, who have bought this freehold bought under the laws in force at the time; but, then, it must be remembered that these laws were made by these people, or by the people belonging to the class now occupying that land. It will be necessary, therefore, in 1896, when the leasehold connected with this property falls in, that the Government should have some power to acquire certain portions along the frontage where homesteads can be established; and, as I take it, this Bill is being brought in for the purpose of meeting cases of that kind, and not for the purpose of stepping in and taking the well-established home of any settler in the colony. A great number of large landowners in the Province of Marlborough, I believe, will meet the Government fairly at that time, and a large number of them will be perfectly willing to make fair exchanges with the Government: that is, they will give the Government portions of frontage and take parts of the back-country in exchange. Others, of course, will not be so willing to do that; and, if a Bill of this kind is not passed, the Minister of Lands at that time, whoever he may be, will find himself in this position: If he has no power to buy the frontages he will simply have to sell the back-country at an enormous sacrifice; and I say that the colony is not justified in making that sacrifice in the existing state of affairs. That in itself, to my mind, is a very powerful argument why some Bill of this kind should be passed. I believe, myself, if this Bill is not passed in such a form as to make it apply to other parts of the colony, it must

Mr. Buick

be passed to apply to Nelson and Marlborough. The question of the pre-emptive right must be dealt with. The settlers there have acquired the pre-emptive right under the leases that exist, and we cannot now step in and confiscate what they have so acquired. They will require to be properly compensated, and that is a matter, of course, which can be taken into consideration when the Bill is in Committee. That does not interfere with the principle. The principle of the Bill is simply this: that private interests shall not interfere with public interests. Although it may appear in some respects drastic now, those gentlemen who sit on the Waste Lands Committee will see that proper safeguards are inserted, and I hope the House will pass the second reading of the Bill, and give them an opportunity of making it a good and workable measure. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Sir, I do not at all agree with the doctrine that is being laid down in this House that, if a measure is shown to be an improper one, it is a sufficient answer to say that the Government do not propose to do this, that, or the other. It is not what the Government proposes—it is what is in the Bill. This Government may be as pure and honest in its intentions as could be wished, and the next Government which may come in may be quite the other way. It is entirely begging the question. I again object to the Government bringing in a Bill and getting the second reading of it carried, and then sending it to a Committee. I say that system is vicious, and that if a Bill is to be referred to the Waste Lands Committee or any other Committee it should go there after the first reading, and be put in a proper form. If the Government cannot draft the Bill properly, let it go to a Committee and there be drafted properly before it goes to the second reading, which is a vital time to the Bill. It is a mere waste of time to debate a Bill on the second reading and then to refer it to a Committee where it is amended so that when it comes back we do not know it because it is in an entirely different shape. I object entirely to that course being followed. And I certainly do not agree with the spirit of this Bill at all. I agree with the honourable member for Inangahua that if a man has property—I do not care whether it is freehold or is held under any other system—it should be absolutely secured to him; and this Bill undoubtedly trenches upon one of our rights—that that which a man has he shall fairly claim as his own. I do not think it is right that the Government should allow a Committee of this House to build up provisions in a Bill. These Bills should have been thoroughly thought out by the Government before they were brought in, and a Committee of this House should not be asked to put them in proper form. That should be the business of the Government during the recess, and not for us when we meet here.

Sir J. HALL.—For many years I have held the opinion, and given expression to it, that whenever it became really necessary for the

Government to take private lands for settlement purposes the Government would be justified in doing so on paying fair compensation. I did not fear that injustice would be done to the owner. My fear rather was for the taxpayer—that the Government would acquire land at a price which they would not actually realise when it was subdivided and sold. But this Bill has very largely affected my opinion. I think a Minister who could bring in a Bill containing such provisions as this would not shrink, if this really expresses his meaning, from doing injustice to the private owner. The provision of clause 3 with reference to the Nelson and Marlborough leases is barefaced confiscation.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—No.

Sir J. HALL.—I assure my honourable friend there is no reference whatever to compensation for deprivation of rights taken away. He says he recognises that these persons have certain rights, but goes on to enact that these rights shall cease to exist; and the Bill says not one word about compensation. If that is not bare-faced confiscation—

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—They have a right to compete for it at public auction.

Sir J. HALL.—The Minister says it shall be put up to auction. Is it to be a *bonâ fide* auction, or a mere mockery? The Minister says the Government may compete against the *bonâ fide* buyer. Does he mean to tell this House that it can be a *bonâ fide* auction when the Government competes for its own land against *bonâ fide* buyers? That is a most immoral suggestion. I am astonished that the honourable gentleman should make a suggestion of that kind. The Government that would do that is not competent to legislate on private property. I am extremely sorry to hear a Minister, on the floor of this House, make such a suggestion. Government are to bid to any extent. They may go to £5 an acre, and then go and sell the land the next day at £1 an acre. I hope the Minister will admit that the suggestion was thoughtlessly made, and one which he cannot justify. He has referred to the failure of the Land for Settlements Act of last session. I am surprised that under this Act he has not been able to obtain land for settlement. Knowing as we do the quantity of private land which is ready to be sold at a reasonable price, the quantity that is constantly advertised, the quantity any individual wanting land can obtain from any land agent, it is surprising to me that the Government have not been able to obtain satisfactory offers. I venture to think that the Minister could get land if he went about it in a different way. It is not the best course to put an advertisement in a paper asking people to send in tenders. They do not know exactly the kind of land that the Government are desirous of bargaining for.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—We told them.

Sir J. HALL.—Hardly so, because all the tenders which have been sent in are for land which appears to be unsuitable for one reason or another. If the Minister had engaged a

well-chosen agent to go round and ascertain from land-agents what land they had to sell, this person, knowing the Minister's mind, knowing the situations in which land was wanted, and knowing the prices the Minister was prepared to give, would have been able to obtain a reasonable quantity of land for settlement. I even yet suggest to the Minister that he should resort to some process of the kind.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—It would be said at once it was making private arrangements.

Sir J. HALL.—The honourable gentleman in any case must make private arrangements. If he cannot obtain land I do not think he should blame the Act; he should rather blame his administration of it. The Minister thinks it will be possible to obtain land at a more reasonable price by compulsory powers, and the honourable member for Timaru suggested that the owner should receive land-tax value with a small addition. I venture to think that the Minister will find himself in an unenviable position if he goes to take a piece of a property here and another piece of a property there, and if the amount of compensation to be paid is left to a Judge and jury. He will find he has not only to pay the land-tax value of the land actually taken, but he has to pay for the diminution of the value of the remainder. In most cases taking a portion of a landed property will diminish the value of what is left, and will thus increase the cost to the colony of the portion that is taken. I am afraid the Minister will be disappointed with the working of the measure now before us. Speaking generally on the desirability of acquiring private lands, I would urge that, although there may be an outcry for the purchase of private lands in the South Island, and in some other districts, which, to some extent, it is desirable to meet, it is not sound policy, while we have a large amount of Crown lands which are not beneficially occupied, to expend large sums of taxpayers' money to put people on lands that are already in beneficial occupation. Surely a wiser policy is to direct the stream of settlement to the Crown lands which are not in beneficial occupation. Sir, there are other portions of the Bill which provide, not for the settlement of the land, but for taking land from one settler and giving it to another. For taking, for instance, a piece of land which may have been acquired by an industrious settler many, many years ago, but which it is now thought desirable to utilise for the occupation of back-country—this is taking it from one man and giving it to another. Surely it is unreasonable to give a power to any Minister to take land from the possessor of front-country merely to assist the operations of a man occupying back-country. A power of that kind ought not to be given to a Minister, but ought only to be exercised by Parliament upon necessity shown. I quite believe that the Minister has good intentions, but he will forgive me for reminding him that a certain very warm place is paved with good intentions. I think such a Bill as this will not promote settlement; and, although the Minister thinks he

may pass the Bill, I do not think that the Parliament of New Zealand will pass such a measure, unless with much better restrictions and safeguards than it now contains.

MR. J. McKENZIE.—Sir, when I introduced into this House the Land for Settlements Bill last year, I was immediately met by honourable gentlemen on the other side of the House with arguments something similar to those used to-night. I was told that all sorts of jobbery and corruption would be done under the Land for Settlements Act of last year. Now, we have had twelve months' trial of that Act, and I do not think that any one could dare to say there has been any corruption, any bribery, or any wrong dealing under that Act. There have been laid on the table of the House all the transactions that have taken place under the Act, and all contracts that have been entered into for the purchase of lands under that Act, showing also the amount of land offered to me. During the nine months the Act has been in operation, although it was stated that there would be bribery and corruption and all sorts of jobbery under that Act, in endeavouring to get fair land at a fair value, we found it was impossible to get land in the districts in which we wanted it for settlement. On every platform during the recess, when referring to the matter, I said that the time had arrived when it was necessary to take land compulsorily for settlement. On every occasion when I said that, it was applauded by the people; and it is of no use for members of this House who may be opposed to the acquiring of land in this way to get up and say it is confiscation, and talk in that kind of way, because they will have to face the question before long in the Districts of Canterbury and North Otago. They will be asked the question at next election; and let members not for one moment forget that. With regard to the arguments of the honourable member for Ellesmere, who thinks that I should have employed some person to go round the country and see the lands people had for sale, what I did was to put advertisements in the papers, asking those who had lands to dispose of to offer them. Several land-agents and others offered lands to me; and what was the result? In almost every instance the valuers appointed by the Government to find out whether the price asked for these lands was reasonable admitted that the prices were too high for the purposes of settlement. In the case of one property that was offered to me in Canterbury the Government sent a valuator over it, who reported to me that the land was not worth anything for the purposes of settlement. The land was in a very good position, between two rivers, close to a railway, and I was told that it was of fair value. I had to go to the trouble of going around it myself, to see whether the representations made were correct or not. The price asked was £4 an acre. I thought to myself, if the land was so cheap, surely it was land that would suit. It was between two rivers, accessible to the railway for people to get to it from every part, close to a river, and only £4 an acre. Surely

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it was worth that money. I went to see the land, and it was a bed of gravel! I would not give 10s. an acre to-morrow for it: and yet £4 was the price we were asked for it; and we were told that it was land suitable for the settlement of the people. Whenever any good land has been offered it has been offered at such a price that it has been found impossible to take it. I think that if you cannot dispose of land for settlement at 5 per cent. on the price you gave for it you had better let it alone. Now, the honourable member for the Peninsula accused the Government, in connection with every Bill they brought down, of sending it to a Committee. Well, this has always been the custom ever since I came to this House. And, although Bills have been amended in Committee, I do not think that the honourable gentleman can say that my Bills have been altered in Committee very much. In one of my Bills that was sent to the Waste Lands Committee not four words were altered, and this House did not alter it much. Another Bill with fifty clauses in it passed through a Committee this morning with very little alteration in it, and I venture to say that when it comes down to this House there will be found very little alteration in it. I wish now to refer to the remarks made by the honourable member for Inangahua, and I am sorry that he is not now in his place. The honourable gentleman never can get up in this House on any question connected with the land-laws but he refers to the perpetual lease. One would imagine that this perpetual lease had been a great success in this colony. But what is the fact? Not one single acre of Crown land in this colony is held under perpetual lease, notwithstanding what we have heard about it. Notwithstanding the law passed, not one single acre is held on perpetual lease without the right of purchase. I do not suppose that one single individual would renew his lease when the time comes: on the contrary, they will purchase the freehold, and the result will be that the Crown will not receive one farthing from the unearned increment. It is all very well talking theory of this sort, and making beautiful schemes, but we have to deal with the practical, and to consider what is best to do to-day in the interests of the colony in a practical way. When the honourable member for Inangahua chooses to bring up this perpetual lease in connection with every land question, then I say that he must become more practical in his ideas before it can be brought about. Then, the honourable gentleman told the House that he brought in a Land Acquisition Bill in 1886. But why did not the Bill pass? The honourable gentleman's Bill was just such a Bill as this, but he did not then say it was confiscation. That Bill was surrounded with so many safeguards as to be worth nothing. Sir, I am prepared to take the honourable member for Inangahua and the honourable member for Mount Ida at their word, and I will provide in this Bill that no homesteads shall be taken, and no small farms shall be taken. We have

rovided in the land-laws of the colony at the present time that not more than 640 acres of first-class land, and not more than 2,000 acres of second-class land shall be held by one man. I will put a proviso in this Bill that the compulsory clauses of this Act shall not apply to any property which is not 640 acres in extent. In fact, I will "go one better," and will provide that the Commission shall only take properties over 1,000 acres of first-class and 2,000 acres of second-class land under the compulsory clauses. It is not the small estates of 2,000 acres that I want to touch under this Bill. We have no such intention and no such desire; and the honourable gentleman ought to know this perfectly well. We have no such intention of touching small estates. Our intention is to keep the operation of this Act to the large estates where land is required for the purposes of settlement; but, of course, if any owner of a small piece of land is willing to sell under this Bill, we are willing to buy it. There is no intention to bring the compulsory clauses into operation in any way to affect small settlers. One honourable member in his speech to-night showed that he had never referred to the Act. It was rather amusing. One would imagine that this was the only Bill on the subject proposed. If honourable members will look at the original Act of last year they will find that the Boards of Commissioners mentioned report in the first place to the Governor of the colony that there is a demand for land, before they can go to work on any land that may be worth reporting on. That clause remains—clause 3 of the original Act. This shows how little attention honourable members give to the subject: and no one showed more ignorance on this point than the honourable member for the Peninsula, because it was evident that, from the manner in which he talked, he did not know such an Act existed. The first thing that the Board have to do is to show to the Governor there is a demand for land in some district; then they have to value the land; they have to show it is fit for settlement; and all this has to be gone through before the compulsory clause is brought into operation at all. It has been said, if you give this power to the Minister of Lands he can use it against his political opponents. I am sorry the honourable member for Mount Ida is not in his place, because I challenge him to show any case in which I have done injury to my political opponents when they came into contact with me in my position as Minister of Lands. I am sure if that honourable member were here he would acknowledge I have not done it. Does any one suppose the Minister will do things of that sort? Is he not responsible to Parliament? Has he not to lay before the House within a certain number of days after Parliament meets a return of the whole of the transactions that have taken place under the Bill? And is he not responsible to the people who sent him here? What would be his position if he did such things? No Parliament would stand it, and the Minister would have to take care in this and every matter to do what is right and

fair to the people as a whole. I do not think it is worth my while keeping the House any longer on this subject. I am willing, as I said before, that this Bill should go to the Waste Lands Committee, and I am prepared to amend it so that the compulsory clauses will not apply to any farm of less than a thousand acres of first-class land, and two thousand acres of second-class land. Then we shall protect all those beautiful homes which the honourable member for the Peninsula and the honourable member for Inangahua were so much afraid of being robbed of. They will be protected by that amendment; and then I shall claim their support to this Bill. This was really a Committee objection, and there was no necessity for the great *furors* that was created about robbery and so forth. What has this question to do with freehold, leasehold, or perpetual lease, or anything else? It has been called "destruction of the freehold." What has that to do with it? Does this Bill destroy the freehold? Certainly not. It simply says that a large number of people in this colony, who cannot get an acre of land on which to establish a home, will have land provided for them, and that they will not be driven away from the country. Then we come to those other clauses in the Bill which give power to the Minister to exchange. There has not been very much said on that subject; but I say this: Let members of this House who will not make provision for the Marlborough and Nelson leases when the time expires, in three years—I say to those gentlemen, let them take the consequences. Are we to have millions of acres of land belonging to the Crown rendered useless because certain people have secured the frontages, and are keeping other people out? That is the question we shall have to meet when the time comes. Are we to pay those who have got those frontages public money to keep down rabbits, because they have secured the key to the country? We have been paying one very wealthy man, who holds over a hundred thousand acres for nothing—we have been paying him besides, for keeping the rabbits down, a large sum of money every year, and he runs his stock on the land and snaps his fingers at us. We can prove that by maps, which are to be seen in the office of the department. Is this to be continued? What is the Minister of Lands accused of? He is accused of everything that is wrong, because he says he should have the right to purchase, as against a man of that sort, when the land is to be put up to auction. They say the Board should put the land up to auction at a certain price. I say the Minister of Lands, in the interests of the colony, should have the right to purchase that at public auction. We have complied with all we promised, and we should be allowed to compete against him for that land, and get it at its fair value. That is all we propose to do, and if that clause is not quite clear on the subject we can make it clear. I say it is the duty of any Government who may sit on these benches to protect the interest of the Crown wherever it is necessary

in that way. It is a matter of notoriety how the land has been disposed of in the past in the Nelson and Marlborough Districts. I hope the House will pass the second reading of this Bill, and then send it to the Waste Lands Committee, and then I shall be prepared to put in a proviso excluding properties not over 1,000 acres of first-class land and 2,000 acres of second-class land from the operation of the compulsory clause. That will secure to those people their homes without any fear of confiscation in any form, and at the same time it will give us an opportunity of getting some land for settlement. I have done my best to induce people in certain places to dispose of their land for settlement at prices which the Government could afford to pay. I have been unsuccessful, and the report which has been laid on the table shows that to be the case. I should be quite prepared to go into this matter with any member of the Opposition, or with those who are opposed to the passing of this Bill, and I could show them estate after estate, and ask them if these estates were suitable for settlement, and, if so, whether the price at which they were offered was too large or not. We have been offered any amount of land at a price at which it was quite impossible to purchase it on behalf of the Government. I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

The House adjourned at twenty-two minutes past one a.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Monday, 4th September, 1893.

Second Readings—Cheviot Estate Disposition Bill—Magistrates' Courts Bill—Criminal Code Bill—District Courts Jurisdiction Extension Bill—Land-drainage Bill—Land Bill—Glimmerburn Forest Bill—Westland and Nelson Coalfields Administration Bill—Halswell River Drainage District Bill—West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

PRAYERS.

SECOND READINGS.

Supreme Court Practice and Procedure Bill, Civil Service Officers' Guarantee Bill, Kyngdon Land-grant Bill.

CHEVIOT ESTATE DISPOSITION BILL.

On the question, That the report on this Bill be agreed to,

Mr. TAYLOR said he was not desirous of saying very much on this matter, because he had entered his protest the other night, but he must say that he exceedingly regretted that the Government had not seen their way to carry out the wishes of the people in the part of the country he came from. He would take up no further time, except to enter his protest, with very great regret, as to the action taken by the Government the other evening.

Report agreed to, and Bill read a third time.

Mr. J. McKensie

MAGISTRATES' COURTS BILL.

Mr. REEVES, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was, to a very great extent indeed, simply a consolidation measure. It repealed the following measures: "The Resident Magistrates Act, 1867"; "The Resident Magistrates Act, 1868"; "The Resident Magistrates' Evidence Act, 1870"; "The Resident Magistrates Act Amendment Act, 1872"; "The Resident Magistrates Act 1867 Amendment Act, 1879"; "The Financial Arrangements Act, 1878" (in part—namely, section 14); "The Enforcement of Judgments Act, 1885" (in part—namely, so much thereof as relates to judgments recovered in Resident Magistrates' Courts); "The Local Courts Proceedings Act, 1888" (in part—namely, so much thereof as relates to Resident Magistrates' Courts). The most important and novel portions of the Bill were those which conferred extended jurisdiction on Magistrates where hitherto they had only a limited jurisdiction, and that portion which gave jurisdiction to Magistrates where they had not hitherto had jurisdiction at all. Hitherto Magistrates had had jurisdiction in matters up to £100, with certain exceptions; but some Magistrates had not even that, because their Courts had been held in places where District Judges sat. It was considered, however, now perfectly needless to limit the jurisdiction of those Magistrates to a less amount than that of their fellows, and all Magistrates would therefore have an extended jurisdiction up to £100. They would also, in a number of cases, have a special jurisdiction up to the value of £200. He would ask honourable gentlemen to give their attention to the clauses of the Bill relating to jurisdiction. He need not dwell upon clause 28, except to recite this part of it:—

"The Court or a Magistrate thereof shall have jurisdiction in any matter within the limits of its jurisdiction, notwithstanding that jurisdiction in any such matter may have been specially granted by any particular statute to a District Court or a Judge thereof."

That explained itself. Section 29 dealt with ordinary jurisdiction up to £100. He would call the attention of honourable gentlemen to subsection (c), that which gave jurisdiction:—

"(c.) The recovery of any demand not exceeding two hundred pounds, which is the whole or part of the unliquidated balance of a partnership account."

The most important or, possibly, the most striking section of the Bill was section 30. That gave jurisdiction, first of all, in cases of—

"(a.) Breach of contract, or tort, where the amount claimed does not exceed two hundred pounds."

Then, also, jurisdiction was given in cases of debt to a like amount; and in the recovery of any payment to a like amount:—

"(d.) The attachment of debts not exceeding in amount the sum of two hundred pounds:

"(e.) The enforcement of claims upon and the recovery of possession of some specific movable property the value whereof does not exceed two hundred pounds:

"(f.) The recovery of possession of tenements, with or without arrears of rent or means profits,—

- (1.) Where the claim is alleged to have arisen on the determination of a tenancy or occupation at a rental not exceeding the rate of two hundred and ten pounds by the year;
- (2.) In other cases, where the value of the tenement does not exceed two hundred pounds."

That, of course, was a very important clause.

Also,—

"(g.) Interpleader cases generally, when the value of the subject-matter in dispute does not exceed two hundred pounds.

"(h.) Where the parties agree by writing, signed by them or their solicitors, that, whatever the amount or value of the subject-matter, but not in excess of five hundred pounds (provided the case be otherwise within the jurisdiction), the Court shall have jurisdiction."

That gave the Courts jurisdiction to the same extent as the English County Courts. Also,—

"(i.) The granting of a writ of arrest for holding to bail any person about to quit the colony leaving unsettled a claim within the ordinary or extended jurisdiction of the Court."

Finally, there was the new power given in subsection (j), which, he believed, was added in Committee in another place. It was as follows:—

"(j.) The settlement of disputes between any building society and its members, where the amount involved does not exceed two hundred pounds, and the recovery of moneys or enforcement of claims by or against any building society, and all other matters arising under 'The Building Societies Act, 1880,' not exceeding in amount or value the sum of two hundred pounds."

Section 31 gave a special jurisdiction. The first part gave special jurisdiction in partnership accounts. Subsection (b) was as follows:—

"(b.) The recovery of any pecuniary compensation not exceeding two hundred pounds for false imprisonment or illegal arrest, or for malicious prosecution, or for libel or slander, or for seduction, or for breach of promise of marriage."

Then, there were subsections (c) and (d):—

"(c.) The recovery of a specific or pecuniary legacy or share of residue not exceeding in value or amount two hundred pounds, where the validity of the bequest, or the construction of the testamentary dispositions in regard thereto, is not disputed."

"(d.) The granting and dissolution of injunctions to prevent irreparable injury to property being the subject-matter of an action within the jurisdiction of the Court, and where the value of such property does not exceed five hundred pounds, or, being land, where the rental thereof does not exceed two hundred and ten pounds per annum."

Finally, they were allowed to exercise all the powers of a Judge of the Supreme Court under section 15 of "The Imprisonment for Debt

Abolition Act, 1874," for the arrest of persons about to quit the colony. The remainder of the clause was as follows:—

"The Governor may from time to time appoint a Magistrate to exercise special jurisdiction, in addition to the original or extended jurisdiction, in respect of all or one or more of the aforesaid matters, and may at any time revoke or cancel any such appointment as to any or all the aforesaid matters, and on such revocation or cancellation being gazetted the powers conferred by such appointments shall cease either wholly or partially, as may be the case."

That was the manner in which the Act was to be worked. In the case of Justices of the Peace, the jurisdiction was retained at £20, and they had the right to sit and exercise jurisdiction when Magistrates were absent. In no case could they exercise jurisdiction to a larger amount than he had stated. They could sit on the bench with Magistrates. Where a question of title arose, clause 34 provided,—

"The Court shall have power to decide the claim which it is the immediate object of the action to enforce; but the judgment of the Court thereon shall not be evidence of title between the parties or their privies in any other proceeding in that or any other Court."

Writs of arrest were granted to Magistrates up to the extent of their jurisdiction, and to Justices of the Peace up to the extent of their jurisdiction. Cases were to be heard in the Court nearest to which the cause of action arose, or where the defendant resided. Affidavits of jurisdiction were abolished, but the Clerk might refuse to issue a summons in any case where he thought application was made to the wrong Court. In places more than ten miles distant from any Court where a Clerk attended continuously, a plaint-note might be sent by post to such Clerk, who thereupon issued a summons and notified the plaintiff by post of the time appointed for the hearing of the case. The special jurisdiction as to Natives in civil and criminal cases was omitted. That was the Bill. It had passed through another place, where it had been carefully considered, and certain amendments made in it which honourable gentlemen would see in the Bill. He believed the Bill would be found an exceedingly useful measure. It was partially a codification of the existing law in a simple and handy form, but it also gave considerably extended powers to Magistrates. The Magistrates' Courts of the colony, by universal admission, did their work well. The Magistrates were men of common-sense, uprightness, and industry. Going to those Courts saved delay, complication, and expense. It might be said that by giving Magistrates extended jurisdiction they were virtually abolishing trial by jury in matters up to the value of £200. Still, if the public desired to trust these Courts in such cases, he thought they should have the right to have their cases heard as cheaply and expeditiously as possible.

Sir R. STOUT hoped the Government would be able to put this Bill and the Criminal Code

Bill through this session. They had been a long while before Parliament. He thought this Bill was something like eight years old, and the Criminal Code Bill was about the same age. He hoped they would both now be passed into law. He believed there would be no opposition to these formal legal Bills; and he would suggest that they might also take the Libel Bill that evening, in order to get it through at the same time. He did not believe there would be any opposition to it any more than to the other Bills. He knew that one honourable member had said that he was going to oppose it, but he was not present that evening. He might point out that this Bill really effected very considerable alteration in the law, and he believed it would tend to there being only two classes of Courts in the future—the Magistrate's Court and the Supreme Court. The District Court would practically be abolished if this Bill came into force. He would not say more, as he wished to see the Bills proceed.

Bill read a second time.

CRIMINAL CODE BILL.

Mr. REEVES.—Sir, the remarks I have to make in asking the House to read this Bill a second time will be in inverse ratio to its length and importance. If it were a Bill which was being introduced for the first time it would demand a speech of a very exhaustive character indeed; but I need hardly remind honourable gentlemen that this is not the first occasion on which we have seen its face here. In another place it has now passed six times. Six times it has been referred to the Statutes Revision Committee, and it has been over and over again revised more or less, lately, I think, more here than elsewhere. It has been read in this House a second time three times, I think, but it has hitherto always failed to pass through Committee. When the Bill was originally introduced exception was taken to certain punishments provided in it. It was pointed out that some of those punishments were unduly harsh, and it seemed to be thought by honourable gentlemen at that time that the Bill actually inflicted fresh punishments, and made the law more rigorous than it was in time past. The Bill is not new, therefore, but it has been carefully revised in that respect. The result has been such that I have authority for assuring the House that, with one exception, there is no new punishment introduced in it, while a number of the punishments have been modified, and in no case are the punishments stronger here than under the law now obtaining in New Zealand. Therefore I think the individual objections raised to the harshness of the Bill in former sessions will fall to the ground. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the one new punishment which has been put in. In clause 184 it provides flogging for boys wantonly endangering passengers by railway. Of course it will be easy for the House, when the Bill goes into Committee, to say whether that shall be retained or not. But, in any case, it does not affect the general character of the Bill, and is a matter of secondary considera-

Sir R. Stout

tion. I need not point out the advisability of our criminal law being codified in such a form that it shall be comprehended by the people, or by any intelligent student. I need not rehearse the mass of Acts, portions of Acts, and Amendment Acts which will be swept off the statute-book if this Bill passes. I need not remind honourable gentlemen of the scattered condition of the law, which is consolidated in a handy form in this Bill. I need not recall to the House the fact that there is no legal student of any note in the Empire who does not warmly indorse the necessity for codification and consolidation. I need only say, therefore, that, large as the Bill is, and great as is the pressure of work thrown upon us, I see no reason why the measure should not pass this session and become law, with very little discussion. I may point out to the House that this Bill has been printed and reprinted and reprinted, and that the cost to the country of printing a bulky Bill of this kind, and reprinting it again and again, is in itself no very trifling item, and on that small ground alone, if there is really no objection to the Bill, and if there is a great deal to be said for it, I think we might just as well pass it this year instead of having it hanging over from session to session as it has been. There are many reasons that may be urged for the measure. I believe that it is a very useful Bill. It is not a party measure in any sense. There is no party vote behind it—there are no threats held out to honourable gentlemen who will or will not vote for it. Nevertheless, I think if we can signalise this session by putting on the statute-book a Bill which will bring home to all persons the exact state of the criminal law, it will prove to be not the least noteworthy work of the session. With these few words, I beg to move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—It is not my intention to oppose the second reading of the Bill, for the simple reason that I have no doubt when the Bill gets into Committee it will be dealt with clause by clause. Now, the introducer of the Bill has made a statement of this kind: that no new punishment is included in this Bill. The newspapers of the colony have criticized this Bill over and over again.

Sir R. STOUT.—That is the other Bill.

Mr. TAYLOR.—What other Bill? Why, Sir, I understood this was the Bill introduced by Mr. Joseph Toke, when Sir Robert Stout was Premier. Of course it may be altered in a few details. But what I want to ask is this, and I ask the country this question: Why are we to retain punishments in this Bill which, I think, ought to be struck out of our law altogether? It is of no use telling the people of the colony that these punishments have obtained in the Home-country for years and years. We want to get rid of those things, and what we want is a Bill in advance of, or at least in accordance with, the age—not the musty parchments and precedents which we have embodied in the Bill. What we want is something in accordance with the spirit of the age; and I defy honourable gentlemen, when we come to

deal with this Bill clause by clause, if there is any feeling of humanity in their breasts, to approve of such punishments. I appeal to the honourable member for Inangahua, when he comes to deal with the Bill clause by clause, to lend his assistance in getting those obsolete punishments struck out. We all know that he has sympathy with the people, and has their cause at heart—or, at any rate, he has the credit for it. I ask him, therefore, when he comes to deal with the Bill clause by clause, whether there are not clauses in respect of which he does not feel it to be a duty which he owes to the country to endeavour to have them struck out. I have a duty, at any rate, to do to those who sent me here, and I am going to do it in this way: by trying to get the law ameliorated in certain directions, notwithstanding the codification, or the insinuations that the Bill has been before the House for the last ten years.

Sir R. STOUT.—What punishments do you object to?

Mr. TAYLOR.—When we come to deal with the Bill clause by clause I will tell you.

Mr. REEVES.—You do not know.

Mr. TAYLOR.—I do not know why the honourable gentleman said that. He has not dealt with the Bill clause by clause. Had he dealt with it clause by clause I should have shown those to which I object. When he says I do not know anything about the clauses of the Bill I must object to that statement. I can grasp the contents of the Bill and deal with them just as well as he can. I do not mean from a scientific or literary point of view, but from a common-sense—

An Hon. MEMBER.—and comprehensive.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Yes, from a common-sense and comprehensive point of view. And sometimes the dealing with the matter in a common-sense and comprehensive point of view gets over all this little “fadding” and that kind of thing that we notice occasionally. At any rate, Sir, I am not going to take up the time of the House in discussing the measure on the second reading, for the simple reason that I shall deal with the Bill clause by clause at the proper time; and when we come to one or two clauses I shall ask the honourable member for Inangahua to express his opinion upon them, and I am sure he will agree that we ought to strike them out.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—On two or three occasions when Bills with a similar title to this one, but not exactly the same throughout, have been before the House, I have pointed out that they had no claim—as this one has no claim—to be called codification measures, but that they were rather consolidating Bills. However, we will not quarrel about names, and as a consolidation measure I think this Bill will be very useful. But it would be vain to expect that the Bill which the Government now introduces to the House is going to pass through as a matter of course. The Criminal Code Bill of last session was referred to a Committee of the House, and reported upon; and I find that a great many—as far as I can see, the majority

—of the amendments proposed by that Committee have been ignored by the Government this year. If that is the treatment the Government are going to deal out to the House through its Committee, who went carefully through the Bill, they will find they are not facilitating the passage of this measure. I should like to point out, though not in detail, some of the amendments which have been ignored. The amendment in clause 112 is so treated. The amendments in clauses 114 and 115 of the Bill of last session are also among those which have been ignored. Clause 177 of the Bill was struck out by the Committee last year, and it appears here again,—creating a new offence. I say it is shameful of the Government to ask this House to pass such a clause. And there is another amendment in the 5th subsection of clause 108 which has also been ignored. The proposed changes appear to me, with other indications in the legislation of this House, to show that there is a disposition to deal more harshly with women than has ever been done before. A most ungenerous and unmanly spirit has actuated the framers of this measure in that direction. There is also a clause inserted here which I pointed out two years ago as one which would be a disgrace to any Bill brought down by a Government calling itself Liberal or what not. It is a clipping from the Irish Coercion Act. There is no similar provision in the law of any other Legislature of the world. Even in Great Britain it was only introduced for special cases. At all events, the Conservative Government of Lord Salisbury recalled the Proclamation which brought that Act into operation over the most of the counties where it was put in force in Ireland, and the Gladstone Government has since recalled the Proclamation from all parts of Ireland. I refer to clause 345. It provides that any single Justice of the Peace, if he suspects a crime has been committed for which a person would be liable for arrest, may summon the suspected person before him, and may require him to give evidence on oath in private—a Star Chamber inquiry, in fact, as it was called, appropriately enough, in Ireland—under penalties such as follow when any witness refuses to answer questions put to him. This is a clause which, I should say, would in itself be sufficient reason for this Bill being thrown under the table. The charge that the clause is a clipping from the Coercion Act of Ireland was challenged before; but it may be seen, at any rate, that it is of foreign extraction if honourable members will look at the First Schedule, in the heading to which will be found these words: “County of —”—a form which, of course, is quite unnatural to any proceeding in this colony. This indicates the origin of the clause. I say, Sir, that, if the Government are going to ignore the work of a Committee of this House in dealing with a large measure of this kind, they may abandon any hope of effecting the passage of such a measure this session. As to the general tendency, in the way of convenience, of a measure of this kind,

I agree that it is desirable that it should pass. But it must not be in the direction of making the law more harsh.

Sir R. STOUT.—It could not be expected that in a consolidation of the criminal law there may not be a good many things which we require to discuss; but I submit that there are very few points which really require discussion, because what is contained in this Bill has been the law for many years, and it is not dealing differently with it. As for some of the sections pointed out by the honourable member for Waitotara, I will just take section 177. I do not know why infanticide ought not to be prevented, and this provision only aims at the prevention of infanticide. I submit, therefore, that it is not making the law harsh as against women to provide against such an offence, for this is what it does, and nothing more. It only provides punishment when the woman who is about to be delivered does not take proper care to have assistance rendered so that the child shall not die. The only clause that the honourable gentleman can hang anything on is that which may be termed the "suspect" clause. I admit that it goes further than the existing law, and I rose for the purpose of making a suggestion to the Government. I would suggest that the House, as I believe has been done previously—I know it was done in the session of 1882—should consent to commit the Bill on all new clauses—that is, on all alterations of the present law, and on any other sections that any member of the House may name; but that, otherwise, the Bill shall be deemed to be passed. That was what was done in the consolidating measures of 1881 and of other sessions. Unless you do that it will be impossible to get the Bill through. It would be absurd to ask the House to take each section of such a very large Bill as this, as it would take a week or more to get it through. But if the House passes a resolution to debate sections that are new, and any additional ones that honourable members wish to draw attention to, I believe there will be quite time to pass the Bill this year. I believe it is very necessary to so carry this codification out as to put our criminal law in a better state.

Dr. NEWMAN.—I think the memory of the honourable member for Inangahua, which is generally of a superlatively good character, has failed him on this occasion. I was a member of this House when he was Premier, and he brought down this Bill and proposed exactly the same "little game"—that the House should consider certain clauses, and pass the rest *en bloc*. This was agreed to by some honourable members, but Sir George Grey proposed to consider every clause, from the 1st to the 407th. It is quite within the province of any one else to propose exactly the same thing, and I hope that the House, when considering the Bill, will go much more carefully into it than merely considering certain clauses. I agree with the honourable member for Christchurch City that there is a very great deal of hard Draconian punishment in the Bill, and it is high time that many of these punishments were cut

down to half or a quarter of what they are. It is quite true that they have been in existence for a great many years; but we are elected to this House for the purpose of amending and improving the law, and I, for one, hope the House will not pass any resolution of the kind suggested, and that, even if it does occupy some extra time, the House will not shirk its duty, but will carefully consider the Bill, and cut down many of the severer punishments in it.

Mr. TANNER.—Sir, I have watched this Bill with considerable interest during the whole currency of this Parliament. In 1891 the House declined to deal with the Bill as then printed, and last year, when it came down to us from another place, it was submitted to a Committee, many of whom were supposed to be experts, and they spent a large amount of time and a great amount of trouble in going carefully through the Bill clause by clause, and effected considerable improvement in it, especially in the reduction of punishments; for many of the punishments in the Bill as it reached us at that time were the judicial survivals of a barbarous past. I am surprised to find that the Government have this session adopted the extraordinary course of taking the Bill as it comes from another place, excluding all the amendments and improvements effected in the Bill by the Committee of the House last session, and that they propose to pass it in this form.

Mr. REEVES.—I beg your pardon: that is not the case.

Mr. TANNER.—I am a member of the Joint Statutes Revision Committee, and on that Committee I was informed that the Upper House took the Bill precisely as it left them last year. This Bill is an unrevised Bill, and, if a division should be taken on the question whether we shall proceed with it at all before it is revised by a Committee of this House, I shall most certainly vote against its being dealt with at present. I feel, as I turn over the Bill and go over it clause by clause, that many of the punishments contained in it are simply a disgrace to any civilised State. They are punishments which were fixed in the reigns of the Georges; some of them date even further back, to a time when the liberty of the subject—and, by the way, there are many honourable gentlemen here who profess to be highly interested in the liberty of the subject, and whose sympathy I claim—was very little understood and even less regarded. I think the House will not be doing its duty unless it appoints, even at this late period of the session, a proper and competent Committee to go through the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. FERGUS.—Sir, we are playing the same old game again, the very same old game. This measure is one which has passed another branch of the Legislature several times. It is not enacting, so far as I can understand, anything fresh; it is simply a codification of the law. Indeed, the honourable gentleman and those who agree with him are, by the action they propose to take, preventing any amendment from being made in our criminal law

this session. Everything he has said about this measure—he has picked out two or three clauses—applies to the existing law, for everything in this Act, as I understand it at present, is on the statute-book now.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—No, certainly not.

Mr. FERGUS.—Then, I say that what the honourable member for Inangahua suggested is the proper course to follow. Let everything that is new to the law be discussed by the House; but pass this Bill as it stands to codify the law, and if there is found to be anything which requires remedy—as I dare say there is—by all means let it be amended by a separate Bill. There could be nothing worse than the position our criminal law is in at present. Very few of those on the Bench—the great unpaid, and, indeed, I might say, the stipendiary Magistrates—know very much about our criminal law. The honourable member for Heathcote objects to a great many of the clauses in the Bill. Well, it is for him to bring pressure to bear upon the Government to alter what he considers wrong; but it is time we brought our criminal law into something like understandable shape. I shall, with very great pleasure, vote for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, it can hardly be said that this Bill has not been revised since it came up last year. It has been reconsidered by the Statutes Revision Committee, and every amendment proposed to be made by the Committee last year was very carefully considered by the present Committee. In some cases they adopted the amendments, in others they rejected them. However, if honourable members wish to make amendments in the Bill their opportunity is to pass its second reading, and get the Bill into Committee; they will then have some chance of making amendments. But if we wish to have an argument in favour of passing the Bill we have only to look at the Third Schedule. It contains three pages of repeals, and to tell me that it is not a judicious action to get rid of statutes that take up three pages in this schedule here seems to be perfectly unreasonable. There have been arguments against excessive punishments. It seems to me there are some who would venture to go in the direction of doing away with punishments altogether. That seems to be the tendency nowadays. Let us have no law at all; license—that is what is wanted. But we must have some punishment, or the law will be to no purpose. I hope the Bill will go into Committee,—where reasonable amendments may be made,—so that we may get on our statute-book a much-needed measure.

Mr. PALMER.—I should not have risen to speak on the Bill at this stage—because I intend to speak on the third reading, but wish the Bill to get into Committee with a view of making amendments in Committee—had it not been for some remarks that have fallen from some honourable members. The honourable member for Wakatipu has stated that this is only a codification measure. If he had read the Bill at all he would have seen that

this statement of his does not accord with fact, as this Bill sets up the machinery for—makes provision for—a Criminal Court of Appeal, and no such Court is now in existence in the colony, though urgently needed. The honourable member for Wakatipu should have known, therefore, that this is not a codification measure. I only mention this one instance, of the Criminal Court of Appeal, to show him that this Bill is not a codification measure, but that it introduces new matter. The honourable member for Bruce said that there are three pages of repeals, and therefore this would be a very good Bill. If it were a codifying measure pure and simple, his argument would have been a legitimate one. But it goes into new matter, and if we committed only the new clauses we should commit more than a quarter of the whole Bill. In regard to what the honourable member for Heathcote said, I was Chairman of the Committee that went into the Bill last year, and we spent a great deal of time over it; we spent days and days over it; and, after duly considering it, certain clauses were struck out and certain others were inserted. Strange to say, I was not on the Committee this year, but I did hear that this year's Committee decided they would take up none of the amendments passed by us last year. Why I was kept off the Committee this year I do not know, but suffice it to say, I was not put on the Committee; and, I believe, all who were on the Committee last year were kept off this year. We struck out certain clauses last year; and then certain clauses were struck out in the House, such as clause 177, referred to by the honourable member for Waitotara. But that clause was again put in this year. Then, clause 379 was struck out last year, after a deliberation of many days. It is a provision from the French criminal law, and I do not like any alteration from the British law at the present time founded on our old maxim that "A man is assumed to be innocent until he is proved guilty." If you follow this Bill, a man's guilt is assumed unless he proves his innocence. By clause 177, in regard to females, they are assumed to be guilty unless they can prove their own innocence. This is a perversion of the British law altogether. If I were to go into all the clauses it would take too long, and I should occupy a large amount of the time of the House. I do not want to delay the measure, so I will reserve all my remarks and objections till the Bill gets into Committee, and then I will move amendments, state my objections *seriatim*, and endeavour to make this into a good and useful Bill.

Mr. SEDDON.—Sir, I am pleased at the reception this Bill has met with this session, and it is necessary that some explanation should be given to honourable members, and to those members who were on the Committee last year, and who paid great attention and devoted a considerable amount of time, and whose work was valuable. And I wish them to understand that this Bill has been through another place, and that it has been

before the Statutes Revision Committee, and, as stated by the honourable member for Bruce, the amendments proposed last year were considered by the Committee, and some of them have been adopted. But my colleague is of the same opinion as I am, that there are many provisions in this Bill we should be very sorry to see continued as the law; and where the punishments are drastic and severe we should be doing our duty to the country and to the Legislature in giving an opportunity to honourable members to amend the law, and make the punishments less severe. And it is with this object in view that my colleague, the Minister of Justice, has introduced the Bill. As to the views of the honourable member for Waitotara and the honourable gentleman who last spoke, the Government are most willing and anxious to meet what they desire; and that, I think, could be done in this way: instead of committing the Bill, to commit all the clauses containing new matter, and, in addition, any clauses in the measure in which amendment was moved by the Committee last year, and in which, no doubt, they would like amendment to be made again, so as to give the House an opportunity of reviewing them. I will go further than that, and I would say that, if there is any clause that any member of the House feels strongly upon, I would ask that that clause should also be committed, and the Government would liberally meet any demand of that kind. We will commit the Bill on Wednesday or Thursday. We do not wish to rush this Bill through. I desire that to be clearly understood. We wish to give honourable members every opportunity of considering it; but we do say that, as the law stands, considering the statutes that have to be repealed, and the laws of the Old Country that are in force in New Zealand, and which the Bill before us deals with, the time has come when the criminal law should be consolidated, and be so put before the people that they can understand it. This Bill, if passed, will have that effect.

Mr. FERGUS.—I desire your ruling, Sir, on a point that has arisen through the remarks of the Premier. Am I to understand that it is competent for this House to refer this Bill to a Committee with the understanding that certain clauses, containing new matter, and to which amendments are not proposed, shall pass at once? I find in the Standing Orders a provision dealing with that question, and I should like to have your direction on the point.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The Standing Order to which the honourable gentleman no doubt refers is Standing Order No. 306, which reads as follows:—

“Bills consolidated by the Commissioners for the Revision of the Statutes, having been committed to and reported on by a Select Committee, shall not, except with regard to any alterations proposed to be made in the existing law, or specific clauses remitted by the House for consideration in Committee, be committed to a Committee of the whole House.”

In anticipation of this question possibly arising, I made inquiry, and was informed on

Mr. Seddon

the best authority that this Bill was originally prepared by the Statutes Revision Committee. Whether the Standing Order is imperative and operative as regards this present Bill, after a lapse of some years, is perhaps open to doubt, and had we only this to rely upon I should have been disposed to ask the House to express its pleasure upon that point. But there is a precedent in this matter. It was quoted just now, and occurred during the time that I have occupied a seat in the House—in 1882, I think, during the Speakership of my predecessor. It was allowed to be proposed from the Chair that certain clauses—clauses named by number—should be remitted to a Committee of the House, to which were remitted, also by number, certain other clauses which were desired to be committed by various honourable members, and no doubt only those clauses would at that period have gone to the Committee but for the fact that Sir George Grey proposed to include all the other clauses. That proposition was carried, so that the original intention could not be given effect to. But there is clearly this precedent: that my predecessor was prepared to accept, and did accept, a proposal that certain particular clauses only should be remitted to the Committee. There being that precedent, I should see my way to accept a similar resolution—that certain clauses be remitted to the Committee—these clauses being those specified by the Government or by other members of the House.

Mr. FERGUS.—I understand, Sir, you rule that, this Bill having been reported on by a Select Committee of the House, it is competent now for the Government to move that it be referred to a Committee to consider certain clauses, and that the other clauses, if the House agrees to the motion of the Government, go as a matter of course; but it is still competent for any individual member to move, and for the House to order, that other clauses of the Bill be submitted to the Committee for consideration.

Mr. SPEAKER.—Yes; certainly.

Mr. O. H. MILLS.—I am very much pleased to see that the Government have brought this Bill before the House, and I trust that the second reading will be carried and the Bill committed. If there were no other provision in the Bill than that providing for a Court of Criminal Appeal, I would do everything I possibly could to get it through the House.

Mr. HOGG.—I exceedingly regret the large amount of costs that have been incurred in printing and reprinting this Bill; but I think, Sir, if considerable expense has been incurred in this matter, it is not altogether the fault of this House. The provisions of the Bill that was submitted to this Parliament originally were such as elicited my heartiest condemnation; and I regret very much to say that, although some of the features of the Bill have been altered, I do not think it is the step in advance that we, as an enlightened community, ought to expect at the hands of Ministers. The provisions of the Bill are wide and elastic, and, it may be said, sharp as an eagle's talons and

savage as an untamed wild beast. There are no less than 429 clauses, representing a most extraordinary category of crimes of different kinds. Now, the Bill, in my opinion, in some places at all events, is simply saturated with blood. It aims throughout at the deprivation of human liberty, and I do not think it is in keeping with modern ideas as to the treatment of criminals and the treatment of crime. This Bill deals with what are called religious and moral offences, and matters of a graver nature; but, after a cursory view of the Bill,—I admit I have not examined many of its clauses; I have merely glanced over some of them,—I find there are really no radical reforms. You will find clause after clause containing such punishments for crimes of varying magnitude as imprisonment for three, seven, and fourteen years; imprisonment for life; flogging, whipping, and so on. Now, I should like to see something like rational treatment substituted for irrational punishment. When we come to look at the whole system of dealing with criminals, what do we find? A hideous travesty of justice. There is no doubt whatever that many of the criminal classes are what are termed “anti-socialists.” They look upon society as their natural enemy; they are at war with every one. But I should like to know whether long terms of imprisonment, in any cases whatever, have been known to alter the character of these individuals. Again, the old criminal offender, the habitual offender, becomes so case-hardened that imprisonment is no punishment whatever to the great majority of the class of offenders I now refer to—the prison is simply a house of refuge. Many of them go there for the winter, to recuperate, and are then prepared for a fresh outbreak upon society. It is a well-known fact that once an individual, whether man or woman, has been converted into a habitual criminal, that individual is just as difficult to reform as a wild beast is to tame. This class are safe as long as they are within the prison walls, but directly they are liberated they prey upon society again. What I maintain is this: that, instead of sentencing men and women, for various offences, to a specified term of imprisonment, if they are to be imprisoned at all they should be allowed to work out their redemption. The term that they are compelled to serve should be entirely measured by their conduct. That would be something like rational treatment. Then, Sir, let us turn our attention to our Courts of law. We call them Courts of justice; but do they really deserve the appellation? Why, the whole system is a barbarous relic handed down from the dark ages. We see there a masquerade. If you enter a Supreme Court, what do you behold? A gentleman presiding, and members of the Bar, dressed in their wigs and gowns, like so many actors on the stage—simply a burlesque. It may be said that I am speaking in an outrageous manner of things that ought to be held in public respect; but, Sir, we have gone beyond those things. I say, society is advancing beyond this kind of burlesque; and I say this without hesitation:

that this system we have of making a periodical masquerade of justice is more for the benefit of those to whom the criminal is really a friend in disguise than for the benefit of society. A huge expenditure at the expense of the law-abiding citizen is incurred in maintaining what I call neither more nor less than a monstrous system. Look at what happens in the case of a man who is sent to gaol. Who suffers? Is it the individual that is imprisoned? I say it is not. As a rule it is the relatives of criminals who suffer. If they are married men, it is their wives and families who suffer in the first instance. And, in reality, the whole community suffers, because we know very well that gaol labour is unproductive. We well know that large sums of money—many scores of thousands of pounds—are spent in the maintenance of these prisons and the maintenance of these criminals. What I should like to see would be a measure devised by which prison labour could be made reproductive. If once prison labour were made reproductive it would go very far towards solving the problem of dealing with criminals, and we should then have very few criminals. If a man who committed a crime knew he would have to make good the amount of his dishonesty—that he would have to repair the wounds he had inflicted on society, no matter whether those wounds were against the person or against property—we should have very few criminals. A man might lapse into crime once, but he would not care to go into it the second time. But our criminal has the satisfaction of knowing that, when he is being punished by society, as a rule he is punishing society in return; and he has the best of the bargain. That is the reason we have criminals existing amongst us so numerously. But there is one feature in this Bill of which I very highly approve. I notice it makes provision for a Court of Criminal Appeal. A few days ago I endeavoured to say a few words in connection with a case that was tried some years ago in the City of Wellington, but unfortunately I had only a few minutes at my disposal. I will again briefly allude to that case, because it shows the necessity, in my opinion, for a Court of Criminal Appeal. I am referring now to the case of Chemis, who is suffering imprisonment for life. I believe if ever there was a case in any country that wanted reconsideration it is the case of this unfortunate man. It may be that I am wrong in my opinion, but I never believed that man was guilty, and I now believe him to be perfectly innocent of the crime for which he is suffering. It may be that the honourable member for Inangahua—I am sorry he is not in his seat now—is right and I am wrong; but, whether I am right or wrong, I will say that, knowing the circumstances that occurred at that man's trial, he did not have the trial that a man whose life and liberty were at stake ought to have had. He did not receive justice at the hands of the principal tribunal of this country. He had odds against him of an overwhelming character. Now, what were the facts of this case? I only

intend to allude to them very briefly, just to show the number of links in the chain of circumstantial evidence which were brought forward to proclaim his guilt, but really proclaimed his innocence. In the first place, it was alleged against the man that he was a foreigner—an Italian—consequently he was likely to be a man of a bloodthirsty character.

Sir R. STOUT.—I would ask, as a point of order, if the honourable gentleman can discuss this case.

Mr. SPEAKER.—It appeared to me that the honourable gentleman only made an allusion to illustrate his argument. He would not be justified in going into the full details of the merits of the *Ohemis* case.

Mr. HOGG.—I am much obliged to you, Sir, for giving me the little latitude which my honourable friend the member for Inangahua, with his love of justice, would withhold.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman should not speak in a disparaging way of another honourable gentleman.

Mr. HOGG.—I am simply saying, Sir, that, in my opinion, that unfortunate man did not receive a fair trial. I am not going to take up many minutes in referring to this case; it is simply by way of illustration.

Mr. SPEAKER.—The honourable gentleman may simply cite the case as one which, in his opinion, justifies a certain clause.

Mr. HOGG.—I will simply cite the case as one which calls for a Court of Criminal Appeal; and, in doing so, without referring at all to the evidence or merits, I would point out this simple fact: that the unfortunate barrister who defended this man was absolutely dying of typhoid fever at the time that the case was proceeding; I think I may be permitted to go so far as to mention that. If for no other reason than this, a provision should be made in this Bill for a Court of Appeal. Possibly an irredeemable wrong may be prevented through the establishment of such a tribunal. I say that the Bill commends itself, at all events, to our attention; but it is not the radical reform I should have liked, or should have expected. And I consider it only the introductory step to something of a very different character. In the meantime, I hope it will be duly considered in Committee; and, although it is more of a consolidating character than anything else, I trust it is simply the thin end of the wedge, and that before long, through the pressure of an educated public opinion, the Government will be compelled to deal with this grave question in a very different way from what they are endeavouring to do now.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON.—I do not rise to speak upon the Bill as a whole, because I do not think it is possible to do so. If we are to do our duty with this Bill we must go over it clause by clause. It is not a consolidation or a codification, Sir; it is neither one nor the other. When we turn to a paragraph like this: "When any such offender is punishable under this Act or any other statute,"—what other statute? This is a Criminal Code, given to us as an entire summary of the criminal law.

Mr. Hogg

There is no indication of other Acts. Then in clause 10 the same thing occurs: "Nothing in this Act contained shall be construed to annul or limit any provisions made by any unrepealed Act other than this Act." Here we are again. What unrepealed Act? Again, I cannot help saying that almost the whole of the provisions dealing with crimes under Title II. are quite unsuited to this colony, and ought to have no place whatever in this Bill. Running down the whole page—page 19—there is no applicability to New Zealand in one single item.

Mr. REEVES was understood to say,—With reference to the remarks of the honourable member for Christchurch City (Mr. Taylor), I do not intend to dole out to him very severe treatment, though he certainly deserves it, and he may thank his stars that I do not feel inclined to give it to him to-night. I do not propose to take the remarks of the honourable gentleman seriously, for I fear he has never read the Bill, and could not give an intelligent summary of the principal features of it; nor, I think, could he answer a single question as to whether there was any change in any one section of the Bill from the existing law, or whether there was not. I venture to say, if I had offered the honourable gentleman, when he was speaking, £50 to answer one of those questions, or any other question with regard to the Act, he could not do it.

Mr. TAYLOR.—Try one now, and I will take it up.

Mr. REEVES.—I thought I should draw the honourable gentleman. He has evidently acquired so much information during the half-hour that he has listened to the discussion of this Bill that he is in quite a venturesome frame of mind. He knows something about the Bill that he did not know before. I am not taking my honourable friend seriously, and will therefore pass on to what fell from the honourable member for Heathcote. He said that all the amendments made by the Select Committee last year had been ignored by the Government. Some of these amendments were ignored, but not by the Government, because, personally, I have no objection to them. The Bill last year was revised by the Joint Statutes Revision Committee, and in revising it this year I could not alter the Bill after it had been submitted to that Committee. But there are certain amendments made by the Committee last year which were ignored by the Statutes Revision Committee, and which I have put into the Bill. I am ready to give the House my word that no clause shall go through, if I can help it, which will make the law any more harsh than it has been hitherto. If there are one or two clauses which it is clear impose additional hardships, I will move their modification, and, if the House refuses to accept that modification, in Committee I will move to report progress. I do not think I can give a more definite promise than that. As a matter of fact, the Bill will, in my opinion, tend to make the law milder than it had been hitherto, and when we have adopted

certain other amendments it will be milder still. I fail, however, to see where the Bill introduces any undesirable features. There might, however, be some justification for amendment in regard to clauses 117 and 345.

Mr. TANNER.—What about five years for throwing stones at houses?

Mr. REEVES.—That was the clause referred to by the honourable member for Waitotara. With regard to that clause, Mr. Balfour's Coercion Act passed in 1877 will be found to contain a clause dealing with this question. That clause was embodied in our draft Bill of 1880. So my honourable friend has, I think, made a little mistake.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—No; I have heard all that before.

Mr. REEVES.—Now with regard to the state of the clause. I do not agree with it. Sir, I must, before I sit down, deal with the complaint which fell from the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison). The honourable gentleman objected that this was not a consolidation Bill, because it did not embody the existing law. I will simply say that the House would not pass a purely codifying or consolidating measure. To do that we should have to re-enact so many measures that the House would refuse to do it. For my own part, I think you should put such an Act on the statute-book that would show you exactly what the law is. I do not believe we shall ever have any criminal-law reform until we codify the existing law in order that we can be brought face to face with it. Now, Sir, the House has refused to adopt that method; consequently, we have to endeavour to modify some of the more startling and objectionable features of the existing law. We had to endeavour to meet pressure brought by honourable gentlemen and public opinion, and to keep in this provision for a Court of Criminal Appeal. I might say I preferred not to see it in this Bill; I preferred to see this Bill simply a consolidating measure: however, as certain modifications in the law have been embodied in the Bill, and have already received the approval of the House, it seemed a desirable course that these clauses and provisions for a Court of Criminal Appeal should also be embodied in it. With the exception of two or three alleged changes, these will be, I hope, the only changes there will be in this Bill by the time it gets through this House. If the House, therefore, will take the Bill on that ground, it is a purely consolidating measure. It is not a measure that attempts to thoroughly reform the criminal law, because it is impossible to comprise such reform in a measure of this kind. You cannot consolidate and thoroughly reform at one and the same time. Were reform attempted in this Bill there would be so many changes that the House would not look at it. I believe that this Bill, as a purely consolidating measure, will, if it is passed through, do all that is hoped. I think also that in the future we can enter upon a far more desirable and useful reformation of the law. In that I agree with the honourable

member for Dunedin City (Mr. W. Hutchison). For that reason I shall ask him, and every other earnest man, to pass this Bill with one or two modifications, so that we may see what our criminal law is, and in future years may be able to deal with this question of reform.

Bill read a second time.

Mr. REEVES.—Sir, I shall move that only such clauses of the Bill be committed as shall be named or determined upon by this House at a future date. That will leave it entirely in the hands of honourable members to decide on a future day as to whether we shall proceed with the Bill.

Mr. TANNER.—I will ask the Minister to fix that date now, so that honourable members may be prepared with their suggestions.

Mr. SEDDON.—As a matter of convenience, the Government will fix the committal for Thursday next, and honourable members can place on the Supplementary Order Paper any amendments they propose.

Mr. FERGUS.—Is it competent, Sir, for the Minister of Justice to move that motion now? It would be competent for him to move it on Thursday. A great many honourable members are absent, and did not know that this Bill was coming on.

Mr. SPEAKER.—If the House were to order simply that the Bill be committed on Thursday next, or any other date, then the order would mean that all the clauses would have to be considered in Committee. If it is not desired to do this, then it will be necessary either to name the clauses now that are to be committed, or to make an order for the committal on a date named of certain clauses to be subsequently named—that is, on the motion to leave the chair.

Mr. W. HUTCHISON.—I most certainly think, Sir, the whole Bill should be gone through, just as any other Bill.

Mr. FERGUS.—I wish to be thoroughly clear on this point. I understand from the Premier that any amendments given notice of on the Order Paper for Thursday will be considered by the Committee.

Mr. SEDDON.—Certainly.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Sir, in addition to the clauses I referred to on the question for the second reading of this Bill, there are two others I should like to see reviewed. I take this opportunity of saying that I wish to see the Bill put through, as I, for one, am very anxious to see such a consolidating measure passed. The two clauses I desire the Minister in charge of the Bill to consider are 379 and 402. The first is a French provision. It permits previous convictions to be alleged in the indictment without previously providing for the identity of the accused. The other clause I would refer to deals with the evidence of husband or wife being available for each other. It is almost the same provision as is now on the statute-book, in an Act introduced by myself. As to that, I should like to bring under the notice of the Minister in charge of the Bill an observation recently made in the House of Lords. The case was suggested of an adulterous wife who

procured a person to personate her husband and to forge his signature. The forger having escaped, the wife could not be prosecuted, because she would naturally not consent to her husband being examined with a view to proving that the incriminating document was a forgery. Therefore the wife was quite free to continue procuring persons to forge her husband's signature. A slight amendment, in clause 402 would probably meet the objection.

Mr. ALLEN.—Sir, if the Bill is committed on Thursday, honourable members will not have an opportunity of considering the amendments, as the Supplementary Order Papers are not circulated until Thursday afternoon.

Sir R. STOUT.—I agree with the course the Government propose with reference to the committal of this Bill. I remember perfectly well the case referred to, and the honourable member for Parnell (Mr. Moss) also gave notice of amendments. I hope the House will not insist upon the whole Bill being committed on Thursday next. If any honourable member thinks that any of the clauses are wrong, and will name them, they can be discussed without going through the whole Bill.

Bill ordered to be committed on Thursday, for the consideration of clauses to be specified.

DISTRICT COURTS JURISDICTION EXTENSION BILL.

Mr. REEVES, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was a very short Bill, and one to extend the jurisdiction of the District Court Judges. He would explain clause 3, but he did not think any other portions of the Bill required much explanation. Clause 5 revised the rate of interest on judgment debts. As honourable members were aware, the rate of interest had fallen considerably throughout the colony, and the Bill provided that the rate of interest on judgment debts should be reduced from 8 to 6 per cent., in accordance with this reduction. Section 6 was not very important. It dealt with receivers of stolen goods. Section 4 dealt with costs under an action that might have been brought in an inferior Court. The really important section was section 3, which gave jurisdiction to the District Courts in claims or demands not exceeding £500, and also in cases of partnership-account disputes in which the amount in dispute did not exceed £500. It was with the object of enabling an action in which a moderate sum was involved to be brought in a District Court, and it saved the trouble and expense of an action being brought in the Supreme Court. The work of the Supreme Court Judges had grown, and by common consent it was admitted that the Judges were now the hardest-worked men in the colony, and, unless they faced the question of appointing another Judge, it was desirable to provide that as much work should be transacted as possible by the inferior Courts.

Sir R. STOUT thought the Bill went entirely in the wrong direction. He thought it would save considerable money to the colony if they had only Magistrates' Courts and the Supreme Court. They did not need a change of the kind

Mr. G. Hutchison

proposed in this Bill; and he thought that steps should be taken to get rid of the District Courts altogether.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON agreed with the Bill generally. He desired to point out to the Minister that where it was intended to increase the jurisdiction the Judge presiding over the Court should be one of approved standing in his profession. It must be evident to anybody who considered the subject—and he was sure it was evident to the Minister in charge—that the remuneration paid to District Court Judges in the colony was very inadequate to the duties they had to perform. He called for a return a few days ago, and he believed it was on the table now, which showed the multifarious duties some of those gentlemen were called upon to fulfil. It was monstrous that, though their duties were being largely increased, no corresponding increase had been made in their salaries. One District Court Judge whose position he was acquainted with, and whose abilities he was very much impressed with, received the magnificent sum of £5 per annum, the other amounts paid to him having been previously appropriated to other and inferior offices heaped upon him. He (Mr. Hutchison) hoped to hear from the Minister that he would consider the propriety of increasing the remuneration paid to District Court Judges.

Mr. REEVES, in reply, agreed to a certain extent with the remarks of the honourable member for Waitotara, and he also agreed with the remarks of the honourable member for Inangahua. But the point was that while they had District Courts these Courts could not be got rid of. At present they were squeezed up between two other Courts, and he thought it was desirable to make them as useful as possible. That was the reason the Government proposed the Bill.

Bill read a second time.

LAND-DRAINAGE BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said honourable members would be aware that in many parts of the colony the drainage of lands was a very important matter for landowners and farmers; but at the present time the greatest possible difficulty existed in settlers not being able to get proper outfalls for their water. The impossibility of getting this done in the past had been the means of preventing a considerable amount of drainage from being done that would otherwise have been carried out, and a considerable amount of land from being reclaimed from swamp into good agricultural land. The Bill now before the House had been prepared with very great care, and it was one that had been asked for by a large number of people in various parts of the colony. He had no doubt honourable members had read the Bill for themselves, and they would see that the necessary machinery was provided for the purpose of enabling people who wished to create a drainage district to form the locality into a district, and, by petition, to get it declared a

drainage district. Then, there were the necessary provisions for the formation of a Board, and also in connection with the various steps that had to be taken by the Board in order to carry out the drainage of any district. Honourable members would also be aware that in connection with this measure there was a second part, called "Irrigation Works." This was to enable settlers in some parts of the country not only to have the land drained, but also to have water brought on to the land where it was required. He intended to submit this Bill to the Agricultural and Stock Committee for the purpose of going over it. He therefore would not take up the time of the House very long that night on the subject.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the Bill had been sent to the agricultural societies.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the Bill had been considerably circulated, and the Government had received a large number of communications about it. There was a considerable demand in various parts of the colony for this Bill, as the want of it had been felt very severely in districts where drainage was required. He considered it one of the most important measures brought before Parliament this year. He had no doubt the Committee would go carefully into the matter, and see for themselves whether the Bill was such as would suit the requirements of the various districts. It might require some amendment. Possibly something might have been overlooked in the preparation of the Bill which honourable members, from their own local knowledge, might find to be necessary, and in that case they would have an opportunity of amending the Bill before the Committee. He therefore hoped there would be no difficulty in having the Bill read a second time, and sent on to the Committee at this stage of the session; and when it came back from the Committee, of course, if honourable members wished to discuss the matter further, he should be very glad to give them an opportunity for further discussion.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked where the Bill was taken from.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said it was not taken from any existing Act that he knew of. It was got up by the department and the Law Officers under his supervision, and was framed accordingly.

Mr. WRIGHT said this Bill, as the honourable gentleman in charge of it had stated, was a very important Bill; and it had this feature about it: that it had been prepared with a much greater degree of care than the majority of Bills introduced by that Minister.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said honourable members passed one the other night without amendment.

Mr. WRIGHT said the Minister stated this Bill might require some amendments; and it certainly would require some amendments. He would indicate two or three of them. The first was in the interpretation clause, where "watercourse" was made to include "all rivers, streams, and passages through which water flows." This would be seen to include

all artificial watercourses; and subsection (4) of clause 14 gave power, under this interpretation clause, to send drainage- or storm-water into water-races, which would be a most objectionable proceeding. But, to his mind, the principal objection to this Bill lay in the fact that it proposed to set up more local bodies. It provided for the creation of Boards of Trustees. Now, he thought, wherever a drainage district was within the limits of a road district, or where it extended over more than one Road Board district but was within the limits of a county, then the County Council or Road Board should be the local body charged with the administration of the measure, to save the colony the incidental expense of keeping the accounts of more local bodies, and to save the ratepayers the trouble of additional elections and the incidental charges. That, to his mind, was one very grave objection to this Bill. The provisions for the election of trustees were on the same lines as the provisions for the election of County Councils; and he could not see why the County Council or Road Board, as the case might be, should not be intrusted with the administration of this Act, even though the drainage-area should overlap the boundaries of a county; because it would be simple enough to do what was done now in the case of bridges on boundaries—one county was charged with the administration of the common interest. But cases where the drainage-area would overlap the boundaries of a county would be quite exceptional, because in the majority of cases the rivers were the dividing boundaries, and must necessarily separate the drainage areas. Clause 21 provided that the Boards of Trustees should not be liable for consequential damages. Well, that might be a reasonable provision, but it must be safeguarded in this direction: that these consequential damages should not be the result of neglect on the part of the officials of the Board. There was no provision made in that direction. It was true the second part of the clause stated that if the owner or occupier of land or property should give notice in writing, warning them of the probability of such damage, then the Board should be liable; but this presupposed that the owners or occupiers were competent judges of the proposed engineering works, which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, they could hardly be expected to be. That was a clause which would require correcting to obviate the risk of great injury being inflicted upon owners. Subsection (3), with regard to the classification of land, provided,—

"Any person who thinks himself aggrieved by such classification may appeal against the same on the grounds following, and no other: That the classification does not fairly classify the land of the appellant; that any land liable to be classified is omitted from the classification, or is not fairly classified."

There was no provision for appealing in cases where land had been altogether improperly included in the rating-area. This was quite a common occurrence, and there was no safeguard in that direction. The Bill gave power

to the Board to appoint treasurers, clerks, surveyors, engineers, valuers, collectors, and all the machinery which large public bodies were generally possessed of. It was true it was permissive, but it contemplated setting up a large body of officials to administer what in many cases might be a very small sum of money. There was another reason why the administration of this Bill should be, as far as possible, left in the hands of the County Councils and Road Boards. If the drainage-area was of large extent, County Councils would be the proper bodies to undertake the work, as they already possessed the requisite staff of officials. If of small extent, the work might be safely intrusted to the Road Boards. There was, in his opinion, no reason for setting up additional local bodies to carry out a measure of this kind. It would merely entail an additional burden upon the people, without a corresponding advantage. There were other minor amendments that would have to be made in the Bill, but he would not occupy the time of the House by referring to them at present.

Dr. NEWMAN said that, as he was not a member of the Stock Committee, he would like to make two or three suggestions to the Minister. He was strongly in favour of the Bill, for he recognised that a Bill of this kind was very much needed. He would like, however, to ask the Minister if he could not provide less cumbersome machinery in a case like this: In the North Island there were swamps which were held by three or four owners; thus only three or four persons were interested; and to elect a Board, and start all the machinery provided for in the Bill, would be expensive and uselessly troublesome in such cases. The Bill would not in this respect meet cases such as the Minister must be aware of in the Manawatu, Rangitikei, and other districts. Supposing three men owned a swamp, and there was no other swamp within twenty miles, it should not be necessary, as he had said, to set up the machinery provided for in the Bill. There was a further trouble, which he did not know whether the Minister had provided for in the measure, and that was, that in many parts of the North Island there were swamps partly owned by Natives and partly by Europeans. He would like the Minister to take a note of this matter, because sometimes Europeans drained the lower end of a swamp, and the Natives who owned the upper part gained a great advantage and yet contributed no part of the cost. He would like the Minister to consider this point, and see if he could not put all the owners on the same footing. He could assure the honourable gentleman that there were many swamps within two or three hundred miles of Wellington which were undrained because the total cost of draining would fall upon an owner who had but a small share in the land. If the amendments he had suggested were made in the Bill he thought that it would be one of the most useful measures which had been introduced that session.

Mr. BUCHANAN had very little to say on

Mr. Wright

this Bill, because, being a member of the Stock Committee, he would have an opportunity of going fully into the details of the measure. He was not always able to speak with approval of the measures in charge of the Minister of Lands, but on the present occasion he thought credit was due to the honourable gentleman for introducing this Bill, even although it might not be—and he believed it was not—in all its provisions what it ought to be. It was, however, a measure which was very much required in various parts of the colony, and some such measure as this should have been passed years ago. In many cases land fell into a few hands simply because of the impossibility of dealing with the drainage, there being no outfall excepting through land belonging to somebody else, and therefore frequently an impassable bar to the drainage. But he would ask the honourable gentleman how it came that by one clause of the Bill—without regard to the area which might be placed under the jurisdiction of any particular Board—the amount which might be borrowed was fixed at £3,000. That was a small detail, but he would like the honourable gentleman to take a note of it, with a view to giving it his consideration before the measure was considered by the Stock Committee. He would not detain the House by making any further remarks, but would express the hope that, in going through the Stock Committee, any crudities which might be in the Bill would be put straight, and that finally the House would be able to pass the measure in a workable form.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, in connection with the remarks made by the honourable member for Ashburton, he might say that the reason why they proposed to establish new Boards was this: that in some of the counties, while one portion of the county might require drainage, another portion might require no drainage, and the difficulty was to get the whole county or road district to move in the matter for the sake of, perhaps, a few persons who might want the drainage.

Mr. WRIGHT said there was no difficulty if they had the power.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said that complaints had been made to him from various parts of the colony in regard to this matter. He might mention that County Councils had the power now to do what was suggested. Any County Council at present could initiate a system of drainage; but it had been pointed out to him that the difficulty was to get a large county to move in the matter of drainage when perhaps only few settlers desired it. That point had been referred to by the honourable member for the Hutt: that was the reason why it was proposed to set up this new Board. He would be very glad to amend the Bill in this way: If a county would take up the matter they should have the management of it; but in the event of a county not doing so he could see no reason why a portion of a county—say, ten or twenty ratepayers—if they wished to arrange for a scheme to be carried out in their own

locality, should not have the power to do so. He was quite prepared to consider the matter fully when the Bill was before the Committee, and he would see what could be done to meet the suggestion of the honourable member for the Hutt.

Dr. NEWMAN.—What about partially Native-owned swamps?

Mr. J. McKENZIE saw no reason why the Natives should not be called upon to allow outfalls to be taken through their land. With regard to the question of borrowing-power, raised by the honourable member for Wairapa, that also could be attended to. His wish was that the Bill should be made a useful one for those who wished to take advantage of it.

Bill read a second time.

LAND BILL.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said it was a very short one, and one in which there was no policy at all. Most of it corrected mistakes made in the Land Act of last session. Honourable members might recollect that, in agreeing to the amendments made by the Upper House in the Land Bill last year, he had referred to the difficulty created by the renumbering of the clauses. He found, after the Act was printed and Parliament had prorogued, that a great many consequential amendments which ought to have been made in the Bill had not been made. The greater part of the present Bill was for the purpose of correcting those mistakes. The Government, he might mention, had found it necessary to get power to take roads through leased lands. At the present time the Crown had power to take roads through lands bought for cash, but through some mistake similar power had not been secured with regard to leasehold land. This Bill would give them the power which they desired in this respect. The only other provision of importance was that giving power to do away with deposits at present paid on the application for land, and, in place of deposits, to take a simple bond by which the applicant undertook to pay a deposit in the event of his being the successful applicant. The Government found that a very important matter, and he hoped the House would agree to the provision. There was a land-sale not long ago when only between some £800 and £400 was required for deposits, but the applicants were so numerous that they had no less than £7,000 lodged with the Receiver of Land Revenue in the shape of deposits. These deposits had to be returned, and in many cases they were marked cheques, and when they were returned the unsuccessful applicant often did not care to send back a receipt. When the Auditor came to the office he found that the Receiver of Land Revenue had returned the deposit, and it was duly noted in his books, but that he had received no receipt for it. As he had said, in many cases the applicant would not take the trouble to send back the receipt.

Mr. WRIGHT said they might call at the office.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that calling at the office might mean, in some cases, a journey of two or three hundred miles, and this was felt to be a great difficulty now, and each land office in the colony at the present time had to keep an extra clerk for the purpose of receiving and returning these deposits. They had thought out various schemes by which they might be able to do without deposits. They thought, for instance, of getting the post-offices to issue post-office orders, but it was found that these post-office orders would entail just as much trouble as marked cheques; and therefore they came to the conclusion that they could do with a simple bond under which the applicant would undertake to pay the money in the event of being the successful applicant. There was no possibility of the Crown losing anything under this scheme, because if the applicant did not pay the amount of the bond he would lose the land. They might have to readvertise the land, but that was all. After consultation with the Auditor, the Treasury, and the Land Department, they came to the conclusion that this would be a solution of the difficulty. He could assure honourable members that, if they looked at the saving of work it would effect in the various land-offices, they would see there was no reason why this provision should not be carried. These were, then, the provisions of the Bill: First, the one for power being taken to construct roads through leased lands, and then this other power to do away with deposits and take these bonds in their place. All the rest of the Bill was simply for the purpose of correcting mistakes made last year in the sections being wrongly numbered, and not corrected when the Bill was printed.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the Minister had anything to say about the alteration of one year to three years, in clause 252.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said that was an amendment made in the Upper House last year, and was not agreed to at the Conference, but by some mistake it had been left in the Act, and if honourable members would look up *Hansard* for themselves they would see that he (Mr. McKenzie) declined to accept this amendment made by the Legislative Council, and it was agreed at the Conference that "three years" should be reinstated; but by some mistake, in moving the amendments made by the Conference, the words were not reinstated.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the Conference agreed to "three years" being reinstated.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said Yes, the Conference agreed to replace the "three years" instead of "one year." He might point out to honourable members that it was most essential that "three years" should be put in, because it would take eighteen months or two years before they could find out whether the applicant for a section was residing on it or not, and, in fact, in Taranaki nearly three years elapsed before the discovery was made that an evasion of the Act was taking place there. Twelve months was altogether too short, for the reason that nothing need be done until some time after a man got his land, and, if twelve months were

put in, they could take no action against anybody evading the Act, because the action would have to be taken within twelve months. As he had pointed out, twelve months was an altogether insufficient time in which to find out whether a man was evading the Act or not. At any rate, as he had explained, the Conference last year agreed to the longer period being reinstated, but by some mistake the reinstatement was not made. There were a number of amendments made by the Legislative Council—a whole sheet was covered with them—some of which the Conference agreed to, and some of which they gave way upon; this particular one was among those upon which they gave way. There was no policy involved in the Bill, although there might be some policy with regard to the provision for the bond instead of the cash deposit, and, as honourable members were aware of the necessity for that, after the explanation he had given he thought it would be admitted that it was very necessary to have those amendments.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON agreed with the Minister that many of these amendments were very desirable, especially that substituting the bond for the payment of money. He had personal knowledge that the raising by poor men of the sum necessary for the payment of deposits, which must necessarily often be unsuccessful, had been in the nature of a heavy tax upon applicants. He would suggest to the Minister, with reference to the amendment to clause 252, for the extension of the time within which a prosecution might be commenced from one year to three years, that the clause was evidently in its wrong place in the Act, seeing that it was under Part IX., which specially dealt with Native lands. The clause should be taken out of that position altogether, or, at any rate, should be given a heading apart from that which it had in the present Act.

Mr. VALENTINE just wished to say that he was quite at one with the Minister with regard to the provision for accepting a bond instead of payment of a deposit, because he had had considerable experience of intending purchasers grumbling at having to lodge the money and then having great difficulty in getting it back from the department. He had heard statements made from time to time that depositors had to wait months—he did not know whether it was true or not—in consequence of the red-tapism, he supposed, of the department; and altogether there was dissatisfaction with the arrangement of having to lodge cash as a deposit. Therefore he was entirely with the Minister, so far as this part of the Bill was concerned. He took the Minister's word for it that there was no real or no particular alteration in the Land Act, excepting as regarded this question of the payment of the deposit; but in Committee they ought to be very careful in scrutinising the effect of the various changes made by the Bill. He entirely accepted the statement of the Minister, and agreed with him as to the advantage of giving a bond instead of lodging cash.

Mr. J. McKensie

Mr. BUCHANAN had only just a word to say with regard to the observations of the Minister of Lands when asking them to read the Bill a second time. The honourable gentleman told the House that in one case lately, where £300 or £400 represented the value of certain sections of land advertised for sale, the department received no less than £7,000 in deposits. Well, long before the honourable gentleman occupied the position which he now held, he (Mr. Buchanan) had again and again asked the Minister in charge of the department to appoint an expert in the value of land, so that the proper value should be put upon each section of land put up for sale. If that were done, they would not, he was satisfied, have the rush for particular undervalued sections that too frequently now happened to be the case. Under the present system the Lands Department, in many cases, affixed values very different from the real value. He happened to be at the Land Office not long ago, when the Board-room was crowded with applicants from various parts of the Wellington Provincial District for a very few sections indeed. These men had gone to the trouble and expense of coming down to Wellington. They had to pay their expenses, and, of course, there was also the loss of their time; and, obviously, only one successful applicant could come out in each case. He ascertained during the short time he remained in the room quite sufficient to show him that these sections had not been valued as they should have been at all. How could it be otherwise when they knew that few of the surveyors had any opportunity of becoming experts in the value of land, and some of the surveyors employed necessarily had no experience at all? They had been engaged for a certain number of years in the work necessary to fit them to become surveyors, but they had no experience at all in the valuing of land; and yet on the report of such men as that they had thousands of acres valued, and advertised accordingly. If the honourable gentleman would look into this, and see that the various blocks of land put up by the Lands Department in different parts of the colony were valued by competent men, it would be of great benefit indeed to the colony.

Mr. WRIGHT had no objection to offer to the principle of the bonds which it was proposed to adopt, but he could see that it might be subject to abuse, inasmuch as there was no check against applications being made of a purely speculative nature; and he would therefore suggest that, instead of demanding a deposit of 10 or 20 per cent., as the case might be, under the Act, a minimum deposit should be fixed so as to check any tendency in that direction. The Minister might argue that there would be the same difficulty in returning a small deposit as there was in returning a large one. That difficulty might be met by the way they took the small deposit. There might be a number of applications, only a few being successful, and, instead of the small deposit being returned by post with a form of receipt enclosed for signature, the department could send a re-

ceipt to the individual, and, if he was not far away, he could come with it for his money, and, if otherwise, he could return the receipt to the department, and the departmental officer could send him a cheque. That could easily be done, and it was not too much to ask the department to do in these small matters, so as to meet the public convenience.

Mr. HOGG might point out that if these clauses were carried into effect one individual might become the bondsman for a whole crowd of agents.

Mr. VALENTINE said, No, he could not; it was a personal bond.

Mr. HOGG was very glad of the explanation, because he might state that he had never been much impressed with the ballot system at all. He had always been of opinion that the applicants for land should be present when the allotment was made, and he thought that the system which had, for a considerable number of years now, been adopted in Victoria, by which applicants were selected, by a competent Board, on account of their suitability or fitness, was vastly superior to the present indiscriminate system, under which large family estates were being created, to the exclusion of *bonâ fide* settlers. Why, it was only a few days ago that a case appeared before the Land Board in Wellington in which an individual holding a high office under the Government of the colony, an individual who was certainly not likely to become a settler upon the land, had acquired 640 acres of first-class land for himself, 640 acres of first-class land for his son, and 320 acres for his daughter. All these sections were in one block, and it was probable that at the next meeting of the Board the titles would be granted. When he made inquiry into the circumstances he discovered that the whole of these sections were being worked as one block.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Do not prejudge the case.

Mr. HOGG said he was not prejudging it. He was only mentioning it; there was no judgment about it. He was not expressing an opinion on it. He merely mentioned the fact that there was a case in which one small family was monopolizing sufficient land, almost, for a special settlement. With regard to the provision that the estimated cost of survey should be deposited by the applicant immediately before the application was approved, he might point out that this pressed very heavily on a considerable number of deserving settlers; and in his opinion there would be more *bonâ fide* applications if the amount now charged for survey were spread over a period of time: for instance, one-half should be sufficient to be deposited at the time, and half in, say, six or twelve months. He knew that a large number of settlers were prevented from applying for unsurveyed land because of the large amount required to be deposited as survey-fees. He could also bear out the statement made by honourable gentlemen that evening, that the amounts that were deposited were held back

for a very unreasonable time. In connection with a land-sale held recently in Wellington they had the amounts of deposits held over for several weeks. In some cases the sums were considerable, and the applicants suffered considerable inconvenience through the unreasonable time for which the amounts were held back. No doubt the amendments proposed were in most instances of a beneficial character, and he hoped the Bill would pass its second reading.

Mr. TAYLOR said the last speaker had made a remark which he (Mr. Taylor) could not understand. He stated that a family of three had obtained some land by ballot. He would like to ask the honourable gentleman, supposing three, or four, or fifty persons applied to take up land under the system of ballot, if three of a family happened to draw a lucky number did that prove the system to be bad? He would like to ask his honourable friend what he was going to substitute for the ballot. As to the system of public auction, it had been, in the past, the curse of the country. A man wishing to obtain a piece of land next to his own might run the price of the land up, and become involved in difficulties in consequence. No fairer system could be adopted than that of the ballot.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in reply, said, with regard to the question of delay in returning deposits, that was one of the reasons why they wished to have a bond. It was impossible to get the deposits returned in a short time. It must be remembered that the Auditor must always have a receipt for the deposits from the Receiver of Land Revenue. That officer had a difficulty, sometimes, in finding out where the applicant was, and where to send the deposit to. Then, with regard to the question raised by the honourable member for Masterton, he (Mr. McKenzie) did not think that the question of a deposit would prevent evasions of the land-laws at all, and the bond was just as safe as the money.

Bill read a second time.

GIMMERBURN FOREST BILL.

Mr. J. McKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he might explain that a piece of land had been set aside some twelve years ago as a forest reserve. There had never been any timber on it; from time immemorial it had been covered with tussock, and there was no timber of any description; it had been set aside for the purpose of being planted. For several years it had been in the occupation of a gentleman who had paid nothing for it. People in the district had made application to have this twelve hundred acres of forest reserve opened for settlement purposes. In accordance with the desire of the people in the district, he had laid on the table of the House and of the other Chamber the necessary Proclamation to remove the reserve. The other House passed a resolution that the reserve should not be removed, but he was sure that in doing so it was under a misapprehension as to the real state of the matter. This piece of land could become a source of revenue to the colony,

and at the present time it was yielding nothing. It was nothing but a rabbit-warren, and was a nuisance to all the people round, and the consequence was, the people were annoyed at its being a reserve at all. It was impossible for the people in the district to plant it, and he was quite sure the colony was not likely to do so; and, at any rate, if it were wished to plant any area of land, there were a large number of reserves as well as this. Seeing that the land had been reserved as a forest, it could not be dealt with as Crown lands, so that it was in the position of being no man's land, and, as he had said, one man had had it for several years without paying any rent. He thought, therefore, it was only right that the colony should get something out of it, and it was only by passing this short Act that it could be done.

Sir R. STOUT did not know anything about this particular piece of land, but he did not think it was advisable—where the Upper House had exercised its undoubted right—to bring in a Bill practically to set aside the Forest Reserves Act. He understood the Council had expressed by resolution its objection to this reserve being disafforested. He supposed it was in order to introduce a Bill a second time—for practically this was doing so. It was, perhaps, not wrong in point of form, though it was in point of principle, that where a measure had been lost it should not be again debated in the same session.

Mr. J. McKENZIE.—It has not been lost.

Sir R. STOUT said it amounted to the same thing. The law said that any proposition to withdraw land from a forest reserve, once objected to by a branch of the Legislature, could not be reintroduced the same session. The honourable gentleman got over that by introducing a Bill; but that was simply getting round the law, and he did not know that that was right. He would suggest that these forest reserves were made in the centre of Otago entirely for the purpose of planting, and he would suggest that, if this Bill passed, the piece of land ought to be given to the County Council, on condition that the Council planted it: that was the proper thing to do. There was no use in selling these little bits of forest reserves all over the country. That County Council had gone to great expense in planting; they had got a forest nursery, and it was absolutely necessary in the interior of Otago to have trees. It was the most treeless place in New Zealand, and something should be done to keep this land as a forest reserve, and to have it planted. He hoped the honourable gentleman would consent, therefore, to give it to the Maniototo County Council on condition that they planted it within a certain number of years. It was absurd and wrong to dispose of every bit of forest reserve in the country; it was utterly wrong.

Sir J. HALL said, as proof of what might be done, as the honourable member for Inangahua suggested, with a treeless part of the country, they had work accomplished on the treeless plains of Canterbury. Large reserves had been made there by the honourable mem-

ber for Halswell when Superintendent of Canterbury. They had been transferred to the County Council, as the last speaker had suggested. And what had been the result? Portions of the reserves had been leased for varying periods, and the rentals received from the reserves so leased had been applied to planting the other portions. Travellers by rail now saw strips of plantations spreading all over the plains in the most satisfactory manner. That was what the planting-reserves were made for. He hoped the Minister would consider whether this forest reserve could not be leased in the same way.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said there were thousands of acres besides this.

Sir J. HALL said this reserve had been occupied by somebody. What had become of the rental?

Mr. J. McKENZIE said he had had it for nothing.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked, why did not the department look after it?

Sir J. HALL said there was no reason why the occupier should not pay rent. He ought not to have had it for twelve years for nothing. There was no reason, so far as he could see, why he should not be made to pay rent in future, and why the rent should not be applied to carry out the purpose for which the reserve was made. When changes of this kind were proposed, dealing with forest reserves, which we should look upon with great jealousy, there ought to be laid on the table very full information regarding it—a full report from the Crown Lands Department upon the circumstances of the case, and a map showing what was proposed to be done. The report should describe exactly why the reserve was no longer necessary, and why it was desirable to abolish it. He looked with great jealousy upon the abolition of these forest reserves, which, if he could have his way, should only be effected by Act of Parliament. The time would come when the present generation would be condemned for not having done more to preserve the forests of the country.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Minister had mentioned this man as not having paid for the land for twelve years. Surely that was the fault of the department. It was within the power of the department to charge rentals for these reserves while they were not being used for the purposes for which they were originally made, and there was provision for that in the existing Land Act.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was not Crown land.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked what it was.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said it was a forest reserve.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the Lands Department had charge of the leasing of it. Any reserves made under that Act could be leased by the Government.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said they could only be leased under the State Forests Act.

Mr. ROLLESTON said under the State Forests Act, too, lands could be leased for the

purpose of making revenue for planting further areas of land. There was no doubt whatever about that. The honourable gentleman did not know the Acts he was administering. Then, again, this was a local Act, and they had no right to have that Act brought down in the way it was. They did not know what the opinions in the locality were, and the people of the locality in which this reserve was situated had a right to be consulted in the matter. He asked the ruling of the Speaker on the point.

Mr. SPEAKER said he had looked into that matter, because when the Bill was introduced he had pointed out that, to judge from the title, it was a local Bill, for the reason that there was a Gimmerburn Forest Bill passed in 1890 which was ruled to be a local Bill; but on looking into the matter he found that the Bill of 1890 proposed to vest certain land in the Corporation of Maniototo, and the present Bill differed from that in that it did not propose to alienate the land dealt with in any way from the Crown. It remained, as he understood, Crown land, and the Bill simply proposed to remove the reserve.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—The Minister says it is not Crown land.

Mr. SPEAKER said he could not hold it to be anything else but Crown land, for he could not imagine the Crown had any power to deal with a reserve which was not Crown land. Therefore, holding it to be Crown land, and seeing that the Bill did not propose to divest the Crown of it, he ruled it to be a public Bill.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said he had taken the opinion of the Solicitor-General on the question, and that gentleman had advised him that it was not a local Bill.

Mr. ROLLESTON said the question was not for the Solicitor-General to determine; it was for the Speaker to determine that.

Mr. VALENTINE said it did seem extraordinary that only some six years ago it was found necessary to pass an Act to vest certain lands as a forest reserve for this particular district, and that now they were endeavouring to pass a Bill for the purpose of taking away the very privilege they gave to that district in 1887. The Minister said he was unable to deal with this particular block of land because it was not Crown land. He would like to ask the honourable gentleman, who administered the State Forests Act? Was it not the honourable gentleman? Was the land not under his control? The honourable gentleman would not advise them whom the land belonged to. The honourable gentleman said it was under the State Forests Act, and surely he had control of it under that Act just as much as if it were under the Land Act. There was no doubt they would have to be very careful in allowing an alteration to be made, in view of the fact that doubtless the Act of 1887 was passed at the request of settlers in that particular district who desired to see the reserve set apart for tree-planting. He was well aware that it was very difficult to let a section of that size for grazing purposes, because the Government would have

to spend a considerable amount of money in fencing and subdividing it, and, if it was over-run with rabbits, as was stated in the Bill, he was sorry to hear it. The honourable gentleman had been held up as a model Minister in regard to the eradication of all sorts of pests, and the keeping-down of this particular rabbit-pest, and yet it appeared that there was a section of land under the control of the honourable gentleman's own department that was over-run with rabbits. If that was so, it was not at all to the credit of the honourable gentleman, because he should see that his officers carried out the Act properly, and that these rabbits were kept down.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Let the land to a squatter, and then call upon him to keep down the rabbit-pest.

Mr. VALENTINE said he was very sorry there had been a good deal of that going on. The Government would not take their fair share of responsibility with regard to keeping down the rabbits,—and that was the trouble. Many years ago, when he was giving evidence as a witness before the Stock Committee, he suggested that some clause ought to be put into the Rabbit Nuisance Bill to compel the Government to destroy rabbits on the public reserves, because, whilst they were endeavouring to legislate to compel other people to keep down the rabbits, there seemed to be no possibility of forcing the Government to do likewise. And here was a clear case—the honourable gentleman or the Government—he would not say the honourable gentleman, as he supposed the rabbits were there before he took office—but the Government were not compelled to keep down the rabbits as they should be, and therefore these sections got into such a state that they were not able to let them. The adjoining landholders would not accept the responsibility of keeping down the rabbits; the land could not be let, and therefore there was no rent to be obtained. If the honourable gentleman could let the land, then he could, as stated by the honourable member for Ellesmere, carry out an annual modicum of tree-planting, so that these reserves should, in time, become properly planted. A suggestion had been made by the honourable member for Inangahua that the reserve should be handed over to the County Council. He did not think the County Council would take it, because they would not accept the responsibility of keeping down the rabbits. He did not know exactly the circumstances under which this section was granted for this particular purpose, but it seemed to him that no reasonable explanation had been given why they, at that short period, should bring into the House another Bill for the purpose of taking away from the settlers what they evidently desired in 1887.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the honourable gentleman was mixing up two matters—it was not the same reserve.

Mr. VALENTINE said, Well, then, he did not understand the Bill. In 1887 an area of 1,000 acres in the Gimmerburn district was set apart as a State forest reserve, and no funds for

planting or otherwise utilising the same had been provided. This Bill went on to say,—

“ . . . whereas no timber is now growing upon the said land, and it is overrun by rabbits; whereas, further, the land can be made to produce revenue to the Crown, instead of being used for pasture by the adjacent pastoral-runholder without any payment therefor, and the land has been applied for in small areas by persons living in the district who wish to become settlers, and it is desirable that the reserve should be removed therefrom for the purpose of settlement.”

Was that the same reserve or not? The honourable gentleman said it was not—that he (Mr. Valentine) was mixing up two matters. He might be wrong. Then, it was his obtuseness in not being able to understand the paragraph in the Bill.

Mr. WARD.—Question.

Mr. VALENTINE said the Hon. the Postmaster-General seemed to be in a hurry over this thing. The honourable gentleman was not particularly well versed in such matters as this. Although the honourable gentleman had large forest reserves in his district, they were all well planted for him—planted by Nature—and a very good revenue was being derived from those reserves, which, but for the action of the House, might still have been forest reserves in the hands of the Crown, but which at the present moment were being utilised for the purpose of producing timber—perhaps to the detriment of the country at a later period. He supposed there were honourable gentlemen in the House who knew the local circumstances in connection with the Bill, and who would be able to enlighten them upon the point as to whether the settlers really desired that this Bill should be carried into law or not. At all events, he said that, the Bill having been rejected already in another Chamber, and having on the face of it a very doubtful appearance, he thought they ought to be very careful in reading it a second time.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he knew the land very well; it happened to be in his district, and he remembered the circumstances under which it was made a forest reserve. The statement in the preamble was also true, that since it had been made a reserve nothing whatever had been done to it; and he did not think that anything was likely to be done to it, because there were no funds. There was no Forest Department. There were no funds, and the County Council had no means at its disposal for forest-planting. He thought the House was making too much importance over the withdrawal of this piece of land from the forest reserves of the colony.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why was it granted?

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said it was granted for the purpose of planting the land with trees, if such could be done. It was a very good thing to make these reserves, and, as a general rule, every one liked to see trees planted in a treeless country whenever it was possible; but he confessed, for his own part, that he believed the land would be better occupied in settlement

than allowing it to remain as it was now. The honourable member for Inangahua, perhaps, did not know the country.

Sir R. STOUT.—I know it very well.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said the honourable member, perhaps, did not know it as intimately as he (Mr. Mackenzie) did; and if it were an easy matter to plant forests in the locality in question—if it were a comparatively inexpensive thing, as it was in other districts—he would entirely agree with the honourable gentleman; but the fact of the matter was that trees did not grow there without a good deal of expense. Honourable members who argued that tree-planting on the Canterbury Plains was somewhat similar to tree-planting in the interior of Otago were making a very great mistake. On the Canterbury Plains it was a very simple and easy matter. If in Canterbury you ran the plough over the land and then planted trees they would grow splendidly; but in the interior of Otago you would require to trench the ground before the trees could be planted with any prospect of success. They had tried the experiment in their gardens, and, although they had succeeded, it was at considerable expense.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What about the Otago Central?

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said the Otago Central country might be very good, and was very good, for a railway-line, but it was not requisite that a piece of country should be suitable for tree-planting to make it suitable for a line of railway. He was speaking from experience; and the honourable member who interrupted him would pardon him for saying that he knew nothing whatever about it. What he had said was the case in Canterbury; but in Otago it was, as he said, a very expensive matter. He would say one thing more before he left the matter: that was, after his experience of Central Otago, the conclusion he came to was that the best kind of forest that could be reared there was that made up of little plantations that people got around their homesteads in the course of time. There was plenty of land that might be profitably utilised for settlement if the settlers were encouraged, and a good deal of encouragement had been given already, although that encouragement was not taken advantage of as he should have liked, for tree-planting. The best kind of planting was what a man did about his own doors. On the whole, he did not think there was any local feeling in the matter. He believed the land in question would be better under settlement than lying waiting for some indefinite time for a forest to be planted there.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the honourable member for Mount Ida had explained to the House as well as it could possibly be done the position of this reserve. He would point out to the honourable member for Inangahua, also to the honourable member for Halswell, the leader of the Opposition, that if the Maniototo County Council wished to plant trees there were thousands of acres in the district in the same position as the reserve in question which they

Mr. Valentine

could get if they wished to commence planting at any time. But they had tried their hands at planting here, and it had been a failure. When he went to the district last year he saw the plantations, and he would not give £5 an acre for them: in fact, they were prevented by the rabbits there when they attempted to plant; and, to plant this piece of land, in the first place they would have to surround it with a wire-netting fence to keep all the rabbits outside of it. Then they would have to trench it, and bring water on to it, before they could get the trees to grow, and he did not think the State was prepared to do that, for he did not think honourable members would vote the money. He was satisfied that the County Council would not find the money to do it if the reserve were handed over to them; but he could assure honourable members that if the County Council were willing to plant trees in the interior there were thousands of acres besides that reserve equally suitable for planting, and more so. This reserve was set aside under the State Forests Act for the purpose of being some day planted, together with a number of other reserves; but not even one of them had yet been planted. The reserve had been a curse to all who had been connected with it, as they had to find the money to keep down the rabbits. Then, they could get no settlers to take it up or lease it under the State Forests Act, as they would have to plant a certain number of trees, and would be offered a lease that would be of no value to them. That was the position at the present time.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why could a man not crop it?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said the law did not permit it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why not alter the law?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said they could not alter the law merely to deal with that one small reserve. He would say something to the House which honourable members were not aware of. There was an extraordinary interest taken in this little reserve now that it was to be dealt with in the House. The matter was taken up by an honourable gentleman in another place, —members of the other Chamber told him so. And why was this reserve taken up? The whole secret was in his desk in the office. He had received a most indignant letter from a squatter who had possession of this land, and who had held the country for several years, —since it was made a State forest,—and for which he paid no rent; and this gentleman felt it very hard that he should be asked to give it up. He had held it for years for nothing. He (Mr. McKenzie) would bring up the letter, and read it when in Committee. Honourable members would then see that he was doing his duty in trying to deal with this piece of land, so as to save the State from having to find the means of clearing it of rabbits, and at the same time get something out of it. He did not see why they should make a present of a thousand acres to a certain runholder simply because it suited him to hold it for nothing.

An Hon. MEMBER.—What is his name?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE was not going to mention names. He knew perfectly well that pressure was brought to bear to defeat the object in another place, but he was doing his duty, and, if the same action was persisted in in the other Chamber, he should speak about it in a way some one would not like. He was simply doing his duty as a Minister of the Crown.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Why do you not make him pay rent for it?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE.—He would not pay any rent in the past.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Why not let it to somebody else?

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said there was no one else to take it up. The honourable gentleman knew perfectly well that under the State Forests Act reserves for forests could not be dealt with in the same way as Crown lands, and to get that property occupied they would have to give a tenure the same as under the Land Act. He hoped no more would be said upon this matter, because he could assure honourable members there was not the slightest chance of the reserve being planted by the Government or by any one in the district; and, if the settlers required it for settlement, why should not the Government open it for them? There were thousands of acres in the same district which the County Council could plant if they chose to do so.

Bill read a second time.

WESTLAND AND NELSON COALFIELDS ADMINISTRATION BILL.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE, in moving the second reading of this Bill, said he might explain that this was not the first time the Bill had been before the House. His honourable friend the leader of the Opposition knew that perfectly well. The Bill was before the House last year, and was then sent to the Waste Lands Committee; but the leader of the Opposition insisted upon the appointment of a Commission. That Commission had been appointed, and had reported upon the matter during the recess. Their report was now on the table of the House. No doubt honourable members had read it carefully, and knew all the circumstances of the case. That would make his duty on the present occasion very light, because if honourable members had read the report they would see that the Bill now proposed was the outcome of it, and it was to give practical effect to the report of the Commission. The object of the Bill was, first, to place upon a more equitable basis the tenure of the Westport colliery reserves of that town. The tenants of those reserves had always been discontented in connection with their leases. They had petitioned the House time after time, and had brought the matter before various Governments on various occasions. There were some seventy-three acres of land in the reserves in the Town of Westport. A portion of that land would be required for railway purposes; and another portion had been set aside, and was to be dealt with when the Bill passed. It was to

be retained for the purpose of railway requirements at any future time. There was a part of the reserve not likely to be required for railway purposes, and it was proposed to give a twenty-one years' lease of that, with the right of renewal, to the present tenants—that was, to those who might choose to take the leases under the Bill. Those who did not wish to accept these leases remained as they were at present—under the Act under which they held their leases at the present time.

An Hon. MEMBER asked how long these leases had to run.

Mr. J. McKENZIE replied, only a few years. He did not know the number of years, but, at any rate, in some cases only a few years. The result of the uncertainty of tenure was that nobody cared to improve the property in any way, from fear of what might happen. It was necessary to encourage them to improve their property, and this Bill gave them a definite tenure. This could be done without any harm to the colony. It would not affect the railway reserve, but it would benefit the people of the district. He could see no reason why the Bill should be rejected on the present occasion. They had had a very able report from the gentlemen appointed to inquire into the matter. The Commissioners were Messrs. A. Greenfield and Barron, and their report placed the matter in a nutshell. After the second reading, he proposed to refer the Bill to the Waste Lands Committee.

Mr. ROLLESTON said he was glad to see an old friend again, in the shape of the present Bill. It had been a matter of very great interest for a considerable number of years. If anything were to be given under the Bill, the reason why it had not been given before was on account of the manner in which the claims had been urged on behalf of those leaseholders, to the prejudice of the public interest. That was his belief. He would like to know, when the Minister replied, whether the Commission—he had not read the report—took the evidence of the Railway Commissioners.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, Yes.

Mr. ROLLESTON asked if the report had been concurred in by the Railway Commissioners.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the officer representing the railway authorities at Westport gave evidence in connection with the matter.

Mr. ROLLESTON wished to know what the Railway Commissioners thought of the evidence. From the evidence of the Commissioners last year the Committee had good reason to believe that the proposals then made were such as could not properly be granted, having due respect to the public interest. It would be their duty to see what the views of those in charge of the railways were, and also to see, from the maps, whether the Bill went in the direction of what could fairly be granted. He hoped they were concessions that might be made. If concessions had been granted in the past they ought not to have been granted, because they had been pressed for in the most injudicious manner by the people representing

the holders of the leases. If these persons had approached the matter with a desire to settle it, and in accordance with the views of the Commissioners, he thought concessions might fairly be granted; otherwise the Bill was likely to appear over and over again, and, if they were in Parliament twenty years hence, the Bill would still come before them.

Mr. VALENTINE understood from the remarks of the Minister that his chief desire was to give some stability to the tenure of the leases in question. He stated that leases for twenty-one years had been granted, and that this land was not likely to be required for railway purposes. He rather agreed with the Minister that there was good reason for giving some reasonable tenure to lessees. He would give the House a clear illustration by a case in point. On a certain date railway lands were advertised to be put up for a term of years—he thought, seven years—and at a rental which, to his mind, seemed excessive. He ventured to predict that no application would be made for the land in consequence of the short term of the lease, and also on account of the larger fact that the land was overvalued. On making inquiry, later on, he found that to have been the case. He would like to draw the attention of the Minister for Public Works to the fact that the Railway Commissioners would be quite willing in many cases to give long leases, but he understood that the honourable gentleman was entirely opposed to long leases being granted.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman was entirely wrong.

Mr. VALENTINE was glad to hear that he had been misinformed, and he would accept the honourable gentleman's statement; but, unless long leases were given, how could they expect people taking up these reserves to reasonably improve them? They required the land for business purposes, and they were prepared to spend considerable sums of money in putting up buildings and making other necessary improvements for the purpose of carrying on their business. But under the present circumstances they could not reasonably be expected to do that. He noticed that the present Bill provided for twenty-one years' leases. They could not get people to take up reserves at a fair rent unless they were assured of a reasonable tenure. There was one point in clause 6, with reference to compensation to lessees for improvements, that he wished to call attention to. He did not understand whether any of the present tenants of the Railway Commissioners could claim any sum by way of compensation for buildings erected on the land. He understood not; but it was provided in this Bill that the lessees should be entitled to remove the improvements within such time after the expiration of the leases as might be granted by the Government. He thought this was reasonable, and he quite agreed with it. He did not see why a man should spend £1,000, say, in improvements on Government ground without being able to obtain some recompense at the end of his lease,

Mr. J. McKensie

and he therefore entirely agreed with the provision in clause 6. He did not know that there was anything else in the measure to refer to. In Committee he would have to go through it clause by clause, and find out the bearings of each provision in the Bill. As far as he could see, the Bill was a reasonable one, as it contained provisions for the protection of the interests of the public.

Sir R. STOUT would only say this: that the one objection that was urged before, he understood, to the granting of the leases was that it might prevent the railway-work going on. He was over the place lately, and it seemed to him there was ample accommodation for the railways for more than twenty years to come. He did not think the working of the railways could be interfered with in the slightest degree by giving the present occupiers of the land some tenure: in fact, he was certain of it. As to the terms, of course these could be arranged. He was sure if any person visited the district he would see that there was more than ample land for railway accommodation if the coal export were multiplied tenfold during the next twenty years. He understood the Bill was going to the Waste Lands Committee; therefore it was unnecessary to discuss it at the present moment.

Mr. WRIGHT said he had read very carefully the report of the Commissioners, and, so long as the Bill now before the House provided only for dealing with these leases entirely on the lines laid down by this Commission, he could see no good reason for objecting to it. But the report of the Commission fully justified the opposition that was given to the measure introduced last session, because the report distinctly pointed out,—

“The rights of lessees to compensation if lands taken for railways or other public purposes: Upon this question we have already stated our opinion, that, if the leases are allowed to run their full term, and the lands are taken by Government for public purposes, and not relet, the lessees have no legal claim to compensation.”

Now, the Bill introduced last year was to the effect that fresh leases should at once be granted to all these tenants, without any reservations or exceptions: it was practically to make them a present of whatever properties were erected on their sections, without regard to public requirements, or to the protection of the public purse. If nothing more was to be given effect to by this Bill than was recommended by the Commissioners, he thought the House might agree to its second reading.

Bill read a second time.

HALSWELL RIVER DRAINAGE DISTRICT BILL.

On the order for the second reading of this Bill being called on,

Mr. SPEAKER said he had referred this Bill to the Joint Committee on Bills, to decide whether it was a public or a local Bill. If the Minister pleased, he could take the second reading, on the understanding that, if

the Committee reported that it was a local Bill, then the order for its committal would have to be discharged.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said he would do that. The object of the Bill was to give effect to an agreement come to between the Government and the Selwyn County Council. The object of the Bill was to enable the drainage-area there to be increased, so as to include Lake Ellesmere, and to enable the Selwyn County Council to keep the water down. Then, the Bill provided for an endowment of land to the County Council that would yield a revenue of £75 a year, for the purpose of keeping down the water of the lake. That was the purpose of the Bill: it was to enable the arrangement come to with the County Council to be carried into effect. In the first place, the Government proposed to pay the County Council £750 for the purpose of putting the drains already in the district in order, and then to grant an endowment, yielding £75 annually, for the purpose of keeping down the water of the lake; and it required the drainage-area to be extended in order to include a portion of the lake.

Sir J. HALL said this was a very urgent Bill. The drainage-works already carried out were falling into disrepair, and there was no power, without legislation, to keep the drains in order, part of the district affected being in the Akaroa County and part in the Selwyn County. Unless this Bill were passed during the present session great damage would ensue to the works already done, and heavy expense would have to be incurred afterwards.

Bill read a second time.

WEST COAST SETTLEMENT RESERVES BILL.

On the question, That this Bill be committed,

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said he had just received from the West Coast a communication which indicated that the translation of this Bill that had been circulated among the Maoris did not give the correct meaning of the English original.

Sir R. STOUT said the Bill had been entirely altered in the Native Affairs Committee—that was the reason.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked, Why should not the amendments made by the Committee in this Bill be distributed also? Had that been done? He saw that the alterations made by the Committee were extensive. That being so, it would only be justice to those concerned—and the Natives on the West Coast were very deeply concerned—in this Bill that a translation of the Bill as now reported from the Native Affairs Committee should be circulated.

Mr. SPEAKER said, Would the Interpreter state if that had been done?

Captain MAIR said the Bill had been circulated in Maori.

Mr. OARROLL might state that the alterations made by the Native Affairs Committee mainly consisted in the striking-out of certain clauses.

Mr. VALENTINE said the Natives ought to know what the clauses were that had been struck out. The Natives were better judges of these matters than honourable members were. It was all very well to take the Minister's statement that certain clauses had been left out, but the omission of these clauses might mean something very serious to those concerned, and the Natives should be informed concerning them. He thought the Bill, as altered, ought to be sent to them in Maori, so that it might be properly discussed.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked if he was to understand from Mr. Speaker that the Bill as amended by the Native Affairs Committee had been circulated in Maori beyond the precincts of the House—to the Natives on the West Coast.

Mr. SPEAKER said he understood from the Interpreter that such had been the case.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON would like to know when it had been circulated. The letter he had received by that night's mail would indicate that the Bill as amended had not been brought sufficiently under the notice of the Natives.

Mr. SPEAKER said the Standing Order on the subject did not provide for the circulation of Maori Bills throughout the whole of the Native districts. All that was required to be done to comply with the Standing Order was, that the Bill should be translated so as to be available for the Maori representatives in the House. He did not think the Standing Order went to the extent of declaring that before Parliament should legislate these Bills should be circulated among the whole of the Native race.

Mr. ROLLESTON said there could be no doubt it was a proper thing to strike out clauses under which regulations were declared to be valid whether they were valid or not; but when they came to clause 6 there was a most important alteration made, the full purport of which it was rather difficult to see. It said,—

“Notwithstanding, however, the provisions of this section, the Public Trustee shall have power to vary or alter the said shares if it be proved to him that the said determination or settlement was erroneous, and to pay the amounts coming to the Natives on the footing of such variation or alteration.”

He could not conceive that the Native Affairs Committee intended to give power to upset the relative shares of Natives. He must say that he thought clause 7, wherein a lease was declared to be valid unless the contrary was proved, ought to be closely examined. This did not seem to him to be satisfactory. It seemed to him to place titles in a somewhat precarious position. The Committee did quite right in striking out clauses 9 and 11, which were of a most arbitrary character. The whole character of the Bill brought down by the Government displayed such entire carelessness in respect to what they were bound to do to protect the Native interests that honourable members could not help looking at the Bill with very considerable suspicion.

Sir R. STOUT might explain, shortly, what the Committee did in regard to this Bill, as he was a member of the Committee. They struck out section 9, which made the regulations valid whether they were valid or not. The main clause which required consideration was clause 6, and he would explain what that clause meant. Judge Wilson sat for, he thought, about two years settling the respective interests of Natives in these reserves. After he had done so, Mr. Rennell, who was agent for the Public Trustee, practically altered a great many of Judge Wilson's decisions, and varied them. This Bill validated partly Judge Wilson's and partly Mr. Rennell's decisions, and Mr. Taipua had stated that the Natives objected to some of Mr. Rennell's decisions. To meet that difficulty a new paragraph at the end of the clause was inserted to allow the Public Trustee to vary Mr. Rennell's decisions bearing on the quantum of interests. The fact was that the Public Trustee had been paying moneys on Mr. Rennell's division of interests for some time, and unless something of this kind were done the payments would be landed in confusion. He (Sir R. Stout) thought Mr. Wilson's decision should be adhered to until another judgment of the Native Land Court varied them. If the provision made by the Bill did not work out well, he thought the Natives would come to Parliament next session to get the decisions altered again by some proper judicial officer. That was the meaning of the old clause 7, now clause 6. With regard to the present clause 7, formerly clause 8, the words here used were those used in the making of by-laws by Municipal Corporations, and in other statutes. In the section as originally proposed the signature to the lease was held to be conclusive evidence that the lease, and authority to grant, were valid. Now it was provided that until the contrary was proved it should be received as evidence. It cast the onus on the person objecting to the lease. Clause 9 was struck out because it allowed the Public Trustee to do pretty well as he pleased. Clause 11 was also struck out for the same reason. Clause 9 had been inserted to meet a difficulty which had arisen as to the amending of leases by the Public Trustee. The Committee thought that there should be such a provision, because it was difficult to get meetings of the Natives together, seeing that a great number of them had gone to stay with Te Whiti. If the provision in the Bill were not made, they would never get a division of the rents at all. He thought he had explained the main part of the Bill. He might say that, after the Bill was discussed in the Native Affairs Committee, all the Native members agreed with the altered provisions. He did not mean to say that they were entirely satisfied with clause 6. He admitted that Mr. Taipua was not very sure even now about clause 6; but that clause was the best they could devise under the circumstances.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said he might point out that, if his correspondent was right, the honourable member for Inangahua was wrong.

This was the explanation in the letter he had received with reference to clause 6:—

"The first apportionment was made by the Public Trustee through the Reserves Trustee. Subsequently the Native Land Court went to very great trouble in apportioning interests when asked by owners, and in many instances altered the previous shares,"

—and so on. It thus appeared that Mr. Rennell dealt with the matter first, and Judge Wilson afterwards.

Sir R. STOUT said that Mr. Rennell altered the matter after Judge Wilson had sat. He did not mean to say that Mr. Rennell might not have made out some divisional interests before the Judge sat; but it was as he had stated. Unless the provision he had indicated was inserted in the Bill the present position would be in a muddle. Unless they sent some judicial officer to revise the whole rents he did not know where the thing could end. Then, also, some of the Natives were getting as little as £1 a year, and if they were to allow those Natives to fight the matter out before the Native Land Court the poorer Natives would lose everything. This clause, in fact, had been suggested by himself, and was inserted to meet that difficulty.

Mr. KAPA thought the definitions made by the Native Land Court should be adhered to. He considered that the definitions of shares were made in a most perfunctory manner by the representative of the Public Trustee, and that they should not be given effect to. He thought they should rather accept the decision of the Native Land Court as to the respective interests of the beneficiaries. In the Native Affairs Committee they were perfectly satisfied with the alterations made in the Bill. There was only one point they were not perfectly satisfied about—that was, with regard to the 6th clause; for they did not consider that a single individual should be authorised to define the shares, in preference to a Judge of the Native Land Court. He was quite sure that if the Native Land Court defined the interests it would only fix them after very careful and exhaustive inquiry, such as would not be the case were the work done by a single individual, such as the Reserves Trustee.

Mr. WRIGHT said, from the remarks made by the last speaker, it would appear necessary to eliminate the part of clause 6 which gave power to the Public Trustee to make changes as to the interests of the various Natives. There was no security for anybody in that clause, and, the Natives themselves objecting to it, he thought it should be struck out. He would like to know whether a translation of the Bill had been placed in the hands of the Natives chiefly concerned in the matter.

Mr. CARROLL.—That is so.

Mr. WRIGHT asked if they had signified their consent to this most extraordinary provision.

Mr. CARROLL.—Do you mean all the Natives on the Coast?

Mr. WRIGHT said he meant the particular Natives interested. To his mind the power

should not be placed in the hands of the Public Trustee or of any other individual to deal with Native lands in that way, and he hoped that in Committee the provision would be struck out.

Mr. CARROLL said there was really nothing in the clause referred to but a fair compromise between the two systems which had been employed in regard to these lands in defining the interests and shares for rent purposes. First of all the work was done by the Reserves Trustee, Mr. Rennell, who made a definition of the shares upon which to pay the rents. Then, afterwards, the Native Land Court operated over the same land, and also defined the same interests; but the two did not correspond. Before the Native Land Court operated over these lands the rents had been paid out on Mr. Rennell's decision; so, when the Court made the subsequent alteration, considerable confusion had arisen in consequence. The clause itself confirmed the first arrangement made by Mr. Rennell, but it gave the Public Trustee power to alter and vary the decision where it was considered necessary, and where it was thought that the Native Land Court's definition of interests was nearer the mark than Mr. Rennell's. He thought no one should exercise that power but the Public Trustee.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Why should he?

Mr. CARROLL said, because he was the proper person, as trustee for the Natives. They were allowing the Public Trustee to make such alterations as would be fair and just. With regard to the translation of the Bill, it was quite true, as the Interpreter had stated, that the Bill as it came from the Committee had been translated and circulated among the Natives. Of course he had not received any communications from them anent the matter; but he did not think it was desirable to wait until he received a communication from every one interested. In the case of Europeans being interested in a Bill affecting the South Island, for instance, they would not keep Parliament waiting until they received a communication from every one in the South Island. As long as the members representing the people interested—especially the Native member representing the West Coast people—knew all about the Bill—

Mr. G. HUTCHISON.—Who represents the West Coast Natives?

Mr. CARROLL said Mr. Taipua did, and he had kept the Natives informed as to what had been going on regarding the Bill. The honourable member had told him that he was in daily communication with some of the Natives in regard to the matter. The alterations made, in the Committee were made with the full approval of the Native members, and had been framed in such a way as to meet their objections.

Bill committed.

Bill reported.

On the question, That the amendments be agreed to,

Mr. G. HUTCHISON said he wished to emphasize an objection he had raised in Com-

mittee to the addition of a proviso to clause 7. The addition read as follows:—

"Notwithstanding, however, the provisions of this section, the Public Trustee shall have power to vary or alter the said shares if it be proved to him that the said determination or settlement was erroneous, and to pay the amounts coming to the Natives on the footing of such variation or alteration."

That amendment gave the Public Trustee arbitrary power to vary or reverse decisions of the Native Land Court. It was, he thought, a very extraordinary and objectionable power to give to the Public Trustee: it was practically to override decisions of a Court the decisions of which were said to be final unless applications for rehearing were lodged within a limited period. He had had occasion also to point out in Committee, on information he believed to be perfectly trustworthy, that the Natives on the Coast affected by this Bill had not been given an opportunity of realising the very extensive amendments made in the Bill in other respects by the Native Affairs Committee. He believed that the House was making a great mistake, first of all, in giving the plenary powers this clause would give to the Public Trustee; and, secondly, it was putting through a Bill which had been so extensively amended by a Select Committee without the Natives on the West Coast, who were immediately affected, being given an opportunity of considering those amendments.

Mr. McGUIRE said he had moved an amendment in Committee to clause 4 of this Bill, which read as follows:—

"That the following stand as subsection (2A) in clause 4:—

"(2A.) Confirm any lease granted by Maoris to Europeans before the passing of the said Act, provided on inquiry that he is satisfied that both parties to the lease desire its continuance, and that no undue advantage has been taken of the Native owners by such lease."

This clause was in the interests of all parties concerned; it was a clause also in the interests of justice and equity: but the House had not seen fit to insert this clause. He thought by not inserting it the House had done a great injustice. There were precedents for inserting this clause. It had been done repeatedly. Persons similarly situated to these persons got their leases confirmed, and this simply gave power to the Public Trustee to adjudicate between the two parties where there was nothing wrong whatever, where the Natives and Europeans were satisfied. All that was asked was for the Public Trustee to decide where all parties agreed. But the House thought it better that those who had made substantial improvements should walk out and leave their saw-mills, their flax-mills, plantations, houses, and other improvements behind them; and they were to have confiscation again on the West Coast. This was a species of eviction which was not equalled in any part of the world, even in Ireland; and that confiscation was going

to take place under this Bill. Again, subsection (8) of clause 4 of this Bill said,—

"The share, estate, or interest of Natives under a lease shall not (except so far as the Public Trustee is concerned) be liable to be seized, sold, attached, or levied upon by any process whatever, or become vested in any Official Assignee or creditors' trustee in bankruptcy, or be subject to any law relating to bankruptcy or insolvency, or be assets in bankruptcy."

Now, what was the meaning of that? Were the Natives to receive rent, and were they not to be subject to the same conditions as Europeans? Should the House pass this Bill with such a clause as he had pointed out? The Government and honourable members would be acting in the interests of robbery. The Natives under this Bill would receive large rents from the Public Trustee, and yet a judgment in the law-courts could not have any effect as against these Natives. There was no honesty here. The Natives ought to be placed exactly on the same footing as the Europeans. This was exceptional treatment. There was no justice or honesty in this. He would therefore draw the attention of the House to this matter before the Bill was passed, and he hoped the House would rectify it. The Government of the day and many honourable members had been trying for some years to make the people of the country believe that leases were better than freeholds. They were continually talking of this all through the country; but what were they doing to improve the position of leaseholders? Absolutely nothing. Did they assist a leaseholder to borrow with advantage? No. For if a leaseholder went into the open market to borrow money on his improvements or goodwill, in most cases he was unable to do so; and, if he did succeed, it was at a ruinous rate of interest. The Government themselves did not, and the Public Trustee was not allowed to, advance money. And now that an amendment was moved in that direction, it received nothing but opposition from honourable gentlemen who preached that leases were better than freehold. What inconsistency! Therefore a person who took a lease from the Crown or the Public Trustee was labouring under a great disadvantage in consequence of this. It was no wonder leases were falling into disrepute in consequence of the Government turning their back upon them. But to come back to those unfortunate settlers on the West Coast, and the treatment they were receiving at the hands of the House, he would not be surprised if such cruel and heartless treatment drove quiet and law-abiding people to desperate acts. The history in connection with this heartless treatment was sad and humiliating. Why drive those people from the lands, which they honestly took up, and for which they paid their rent, and between whom and the Natives the utmost good feeling existed? Both parties were agreed: the Natives did not want to rob the Europeans—they were both satisfied. The Natives were ready to adjust the matter in any way the House might think fit. They were

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willing to submit the whole matter to the Public Trustee, and the amendment which he (Mr. McGuire) had moved would give the Public Trustee power to do justice to all parties concerned. At that late hour of the night he would not take up the time of the House by discussing this question further, but, in conclusion, he trusted the House would hesitate, and yet do justice before the Bill was finally passed through all its stages.

Amendments agreed to.

The House adjourned at ten minutes past one o'clock a.m.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

Tuesday, 5th September, 1893.

First Reading—Second Reading—Third Reading—
Library—Alcoholic Liquors Sale Control Bill—
Electoral Bill.

The Hon. the SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

FIRST READING.

Cheviot Estate Disposition Bill.

SECOND READING.

Banks and Bankers Bill.

THIRD READING.

Mangatu No. 1 Empowering Bill.

LIBRARY.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, *That it be a recommendation from this Council to the Library Committee that arrangements be made whereby the students attending the technical schools may be allowed the privilege of using the parliamentary library during the recess, for reference purposes only.* His object in moving this motion was simply to increase the usefulness, if possible, of a very large number of books in the library now lying idle from one year to another. He hoped, if the motion were carried, that arrangements could be made by which students attending evening classes could have the use of the library. To effect this object it would be necessary to open the library two nights of the week at all events, at convenient hours. He knew there were many books which would be very useful, for the purpose of reference, to students attending technical schools if the privilege he moved for were given them.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI thought it might be advisable to include in the motion students from Auckland and Christchurch and other parts of the colony, and perhaps it would be better to pay their expenses to come to Wellington to get the benefit of the library. He did not think it was desirable that one place only should get the benefit of the books.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER said, in the absence of the Chairman of the Joint Library Committee, he would point out to the Council that

the Library Committee was always very liberal in responding to applications made by students for permission to use the library. In fact, there were regulations under which, he thought, no student found any difficulty in obtaining permission to use books in the library. He would therefore appeal to his honourable friend to withdraw his motion, and not make a recommendation to the Committee as from the Council; because if students wished to make use of the library they could apply to the Committee, when every justice would be given to them. If they made that recommendation to the Committee he thought it would be regarded by them in the nature of a command, and he thought it desirable that the Committee should exercise some discretion or control over the use of the books.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS asked if the honourable gentleman was prepared to withdraw his motion. He agreed with his honourable friend Mr. Oliver that the Committee had always acted liberally, and that there should not be imposed upon them any commands, because, if admission to the library were granted to students as a right by this resolution, it might be abused. He thought it might be left to the Library Committee to use their own discretion in each case.

The Hon. Mr. BOWEN would suggest to the honourable gentleman to withdraw his motion, or, if he did not care to do so, he could at any rate postpone it; and if in the meantime he interviewed the Chairman of the Committee he would find there would be no difficulty whatever in the way of any student, who *bona fide* wanted books for reference, getting access to them during the recess. There was always considerable danger in making a hard-and-fast rule, because it was well known that the library was not strongly manned with attendants to keep the books in order. While there was every desire to give facilities to students who wanted access to any books for a particular purpose, it was found necessary to prevent unguarded access to our valuable library.

The Hon. Mr. KELLY thought, if there were any books of a technical character, the Library Committee might very well make the concession asked for. From his knowledge, however, he thought the number of technical works should be increased before the library could be of much use to students. The Council might very well refer the matter to the Committee for consideration.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER said, so far as the merits of the honourable gentleman's motion went, he would be very glad indeed to see the library made use of for such purposes of instruction as were possible. Whether his honourable friend adopted the suggestion to hold over the motion or not, he, at all events, had his (Mr. Walker's) hearty support in trying to bring the matter forward.

The Hon. Mr. MANTELL was surprised that any member of the Council should be unaware that at the present time, during the recess, it was the practice of the Committee to give such

access as was suggested in the motion. The Committee, he thought, would be rather astonished to receive such a resolution from the Council, and would regret to see that their efforts to make the library as useful as possible had not been properly understood or appreciated. He could assure the mover of this resolution that it recommended nothing but what he believed to have been the practice for years past. He thought, therefore, his honourable friend should drop the motion in the meantime, and seek the information he was advised to seek.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON would withdraw the motion, as the discussion had accomplished the object he had in view—namely, to direct the attention of students outside to the fact that such concessions were to be obtained. He was afraid that the fact was not generally known at present. He had perfect confidence in the Library Committee in the matter, and would withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn.

ALCOHOLIC LIQUORS SALE CONTROL BILL.

On the order for the second reading being called on,

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART said,—Sir, I hope the honourable gentleman does not intend to press this Bill to-day. It would be a convenience, I think, to honourable members if it were postponed until to-morrow or the next day.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I should like to proceed with the second reading now, and then, if the Council thinks it desirable to adjourn the debate, I should, of course, be pleased to put myself in the hands of the Council. With that understanding, I should like to be allowed to proceed. When my honourable friend the Premier, in another place, introduced this Bill he was under the impression that it was one that would give general satisfaction to all parties concerned. Since that stage of the proceedings there has been a good deal of discussion on this subject—a discussion which probably most honourable members have noted—and I have no doubt they have made themselves thoroughly acquainted with the position of those who are in favour of and those who are not in favour of the measure. The Bill itself contains certain principles which I shall explain. At the same time, I would point out to the Council that the measure is one which the Government have thought it desirable to grapple with now with a view to settling a question on which the extremists on both sides have almost got at one another's throats. The Government have but one desire—that is, to moderate and control this traffic. I think this Bill will be found to contain principles which will meet with the concurrence of the extremists on both sides, and to be one that they will agree with. The Bill is also, I trust, one which will commend itself to this Council. There are provisions in it of a character I think it would be well to settle; and I am quite sure that even

the greatest extremists, both those in favour of prohibition and who think that would be a good thing to obtain, and also those in favour of the present *status quo*, will agree with the provisions with regard to reduction in the number of licensed houses under certain circumstances. In this Bill we have three questions to be put to the people for their direct vote—one for the maintenance of the *status quo*, another for reduction, the third for what is known as the direct veto. The measure also provides for an increase in size of what might be called the electorates, and it proposes to make the electorates the same exactly as those for the election of members of the House of Representatives. The Government propose also to take the electoral roll for the district for the election of the member for the House as the roll for the purpose of voting on the licensing question, and for saying how the question is to be dealt with. It is proposed to use the same machinery for controlling the licensing question as is used in the case of elections to the House. We propose, also, that the Committee itself shall consist of nine members: that is exactly the same number of members as is required in the constitution of a County Council. We propose no new licenses shall be granted until after the next census is taken. The intention is that the present position shall be maintained until the principles contained in this Bill are in such a position as to be workable. I would call the attention of members of the Council specially to that clause which provides that, if after next census there is an increase in the population to the extent of 25 per cent. over last census in any particular district, a poll shall be taken, and if a majority of three-fifths are in favour of an increase in the number of licenses in the district an increase shall be granted, but this three-fifths majority must be in a poll of half the number of votes on the roll: if not, matters will remain as they are, subject to the other provisions of the Bill to which I have referred. There is also provided a new qualification, so to speak. The Bill states that every person is qualified to be a member of a Licensing Committee with the exception of those referred to; and to this provision I would call the attention of the Council. It says that no person "who is a brewer, wine or spirit merchant, malster, distiller, importer for sale of or a dealer in fermented or spirituous liquors, or in partnership with any such person," is qualified to become a member of a Licensing Committee. We also propose another alteration in the licensing-law. It is provided that no married or unmarried woman shall hold a license in the future, but any widow or any wife who has obtained a protection order from her husband may still hold a license. It is considered desirable that persons who are not married should not be placed in the responsible position of having to conduct a business of this kind without the protection that a husband would necessarily afford. We propose also that the hours of closing shall be limited, and that ten

Hon. Mr. Mantell

o'clock shall be the usual hour for closing. Licenses to keep open from ten to eleven o'clock may be granted for an additional fee. I come now to what is probably the most important point in this Bill—that is, the way in which an election is to be carried on. If at the taking of a poll a majority, or, rather, an absolute majority, of those voting are found in favour of an increase, then the number of licenses may be increased. If a majority is found in favour of a decrease—that is, an absolute majority of those at the poll—I use the words “absolute majority” advisedly, because it is significant in this Bill—then there is to be a reduction. We now come to what may be termed the direct veto. If a majority of three-fifths of the votes recorded are in favour of granting no license, it becomes a direct veto. If again, on the other hand, there is not an absolute majority of those who record their votes by direct veto for total closing, yet the votes given in favour of such proposal added to the number of votes given at the same poll in favour of the proposal that the number of licenses in the district be reduced—the two added together—will be deemed to be for a reduction in the licenses. But it is proposed that half the electors on the roll must record their votes on the occasion. Another important point with reference to the reduction of houses is that it is proposed that they shall be reduced in the manner suggested in clause 19: that is to say, if a reduction is deemed desirable, the houses which have violated the law are to be the first to suffer. The houses of persons who have sold liquor on Sundays, or who have sold it to children or prohibited persons, are to be the first to be reduced. The next are those houses which have not a good class of accommodation—that is, the accommodation which the better classes of houses should have. At any rate, it is provided that the reduction shall not take place without a due regard to the welfare of the district over which the Committee may have control. Then, there is in another clause a provision of some importance: clause 23 provides that the local authorities shall have the power to rate and the power to tax themselves, in the event of their losing any revenues through the reduction or closing of hotels, to the extent of the amount they have lost by the action of the Committee.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI.—Hear, hear. We have not enough taxes already.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I am glad to hear my honourable friend say, “Hear, hear,” and I am quite sure now I shall have his support on the Bill. There is another very important clause in the Bill: that is, in the event of a house being closed the tenant may, under certain circumstances, give notice to the immediate landlord, and may then cease his occupation. The tenant will therefore not lose anything in connection with the action of the Committee, as he is relieved immediately from the tenancy of any house in question. With regard to the other clauses in the Bill, they are of a purely machinery character, and there is no need for me to explain them. I have re-

ferred to the principles of the measure, and to the interpretation which is to be given to the clauses referred to. I think there is no need for me to trespass further upon the patience of the Council, and I shall now content myself with moving, *That the Bill be now read the second time.*

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I beg to move, *That the debate be now adjourned.*

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—I think, Sir, the honourable gentleman should give some reasons for asking that the debate be adjourned. We came here to-day on purpose to go on with this Bill.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—If the honourable gentleman had been in his place he would have heard what was said.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—I hope, Sir, the Council will go on with the Bill. It is an important Bill, and I hope the Council will not agree to the adjournment. I do not agree to this way of dealing with the Order Paper, or with the way the orders are shunted about. Honourable members do not understand what is to be gone on with or not. I think we should go on with the discussion until we see what the views of honourable members are upon this measure, in order that we may obtain the different opinions of different sides.

The Hon. Mr. STEVENS.—I trust the Council will agree to adjourn, for the reason that the Colonial Secretary stated on Friday that he intended to place the Electoral Bill first on the Order Paper for to-day. I heard that statement distinctly made myself. If the discussion goes on this afternoon, I trust there will be no attempt made to close it to-day. I know that a number of honourable gentlemen wish to consider the matter, and to speak on the subject, and they want some light on the subject. I may candidly say that I am myself one of them, and I conceive this question to be a most important one, and one that justifies a certain amount of hesitation. I trust that the Hon. Mr. McLean and others will not force the Bill to its second reading to-day, in face of the circumstances I have stated.

The Council divided on the question, “That the debate be adjourned.”

AYES, 19.

Acland	Jennings	Reynolds
Barnicoat	Johnston	Stevens
Bolt	MacGregor	Stewart
Bonar	McCullough	Walker, L.
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Hart	Ormond	Williams.
Jenkinson		

NOES, 19.

Bowen	McLean	Rigg
Buckley	Montgomery	Shrimski
Feldwick	Peacock	Swanson
Holmes	Pharazyn	Wahawaha
Kelly	Pollen	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Richardson	Whitmore.
Mantell		

The Hon. the SPEAKER gave his casting-vote with the “Noes.”

Motion for adjournment negatived.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—Sir, the Hon. the Attorney-General, in moving the second reading of this Bill, expressed the opinion that it would meet with general public satisfaction outside as well as in this Council; but I hope that my honourable and learned friend will find there are other members of this Council who agree with me that this is a measure which might be very conveniently postponed to a future occasion. It is, as we all know, a very earnest attempt on the part of the Government to mediate upon this question between extreme opinions, but it represents one of those compromises which give satisfaction to neither party, while it is capable at the same time of inflicting a great deal of unnecessary and unjustifiable wrong on persons who do not deserve any such punishments. The Bill is, notwithstanding its pretension to be a separate Bill, practically nothing more than an additional amendment to the Licensing Act of 1881. It creates a new constituency for dealing with questions of this kind, substituting for the ratepayers the electors of a licensing district, and it imposes upon these new electors the difficult duty of giving a deliberate and intelligent vote upon an important social question which affects private individuals, without any possibility of their knowing what the condition of the law is under which they are forced to act. There are four Acts affecting this question, and with which this Bill must be read—the original Act of 1881, and three or four amendments besides. I want to know how an elector coming new to the consideration of this question can find out what the law is in this connection. How could he be expected, coming new to the question, to give an intelligent vote upon such a question as this? Sir, regarding this matter, it is quite certain that this will be a burning question at the hustings within a few months at the most, at the next general election. It is equally certain, to my mind, that whatever we do now will have to be undone as soon as the new Parliament is in session. Undoubtedly it will; there is no possibility of avoiding it. When new legislation in this matter is proposed I hope it will be not an amending measure, but a consolidating measure: not an additional amendment to the old Licensing Act, but a new and statesmanlike measure, looking at the whole question from the social point of view as well as from the other, and putting the law into some intelligible shape, the basis for which would be got from consultation with the people at the hustings. And when a Bill of that kind is presented to this Council I hope that, while giving the people the power of restricting the issue of licenses, it will contain also provisions for compensating those persons who by that act will be deprived of the means of obtaining their livelihood. I know of no reason whatever why an individual engaged in keeping a public-house, doing honestly and lawfully what the law authorises and, in fact, encourages him to do for the public advantage, should have his property confiscated for no fault of his own, in order to carry out a different policy or social reform which may

recommend itself to the majority. There is no reason whatever in that. Justice requires that the individual so injured for the benefit of the public should receive compensation for his loss. We all know very well that besides the individual licensee there are other persons behind him who are owners of the house in which the license is held. We know very well also that a very serious and heavy expense has been imposed upon the owners of these houses by Licensing Committees for improvements, additions, and so forth, as conditions under which the licenses should be held. On what grounds are the Licensing Committees to be authorised to confiscate the property of persons who have only done what the law and the Licensing Committees required them to do? Justice requires that their case should be considered. We think very much of the interests of the local bodies, who may lose revenue by the restriction of the number of licenses issued; but, I ask, are the claims of these local bodies much superior in point of justice to the claims of individuals? I do not think they are. I do most sincerely hope that no Bill of this kind will ever be allowed to pass this Council, in which justice is not secured to those people who may be injured by the passing of such a law. I need not detain the Council any longer. I propose to apply the direct veto to this particular Bill. I move, *That the Bill be ordered to be read the second time this day six months.*

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I only wish to state that I hope this Bill will be discussed. Honourable members opposed the adjournment of the debate, and it looks very much as if there will be no discussion on the Bill. I hope we shall have an opportunity of deciding how we shall vote on it. I have not studied the Bill yet.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—As one of those who took an active part in assisting to frame the present Licensing Act in the other House, and who assisted Sir William Fox on that occasion a great deal, I now feel in this position: I feel that those whom I was assisting then, and endeavoured to moderate, are going much further than I am prepared to go myself. Sir, I am sorry that a motion should have been moved in regard to this Bill like that proposed by the Hon. Dr. Pollen. I think, myself, that this Bill, representing, as I believe it does, an honest attempt to mediate between two extremes, should not get the despatch my honourable friend proposes to give it, and that it demands the serious consideration of this Council. It is useless of my honourable friend to say that this will not settle it. We have seen a compromise before to-day, and have seen how difficult it is to upset it; and, if we can amend this Bill in Committee so as to make it a fair compromise, then I say the Council will be conferring a lasting benefit on the country. There are parts of the Bill that I myself am anxious to see amended. I am anxious to see the Licensing Committees, which I am sorry to say I helped to set up, and in regard to which I am not at all proud of my handywork—I am

very anxious to see the Licensing Committees done away with, and the power handed back to the Resident Magistrates, after the vote of the people has been taken on the question. We have now a class of Resident Magistrates in New Zealand that you will not find in any of the other colonies; and I think the mass of the people of this colony would be very glad to allow this power to revert to the Resident Magistrates. However honest Licensing Committees may desire to be, pressure is brought to bear on them, and they have not done that duty in reducing the licenses that was expected of them. If they had dealt with the matter thoroughly,—stopped mere grog-shops, and left the good houses which provide good accommodation, and were well conducted,—they would have been doing their duty. It is the fact of their not having done that that has created all this howl against the liquor traffic. If the traffic had been controlled in accordance with the provisions of the Act now in existence, there would not have been the same outcry against it. I am not prepared to say I would go the length of giving compensation, but I am prepared to say that these houses should be dealt fairly and justly with in the granting of their licenses, and those houses which are well conducted, and upon which the proprietors have had to spend so much money, should not have their licenses taken away. It is for the Legislature to provide some restraint against those who would go to such extremes as have been proposed, and I think that this Bill provides a safeguard in that way. The Hon. Dr. Pollen said that a new Parliament would not be equal to giving an intelligent vote on a Bill like this.

The Hon. Dr. POLLEN.—No; I said the new constituencies.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN.—Well, the new constituencies. I am happy to hear the honourable gentleman correct me. I venture to say that this liquor business has been threshed out and discussed as no other traffic has been in New Zealand, and the new constituencies he speaks of will be as conversant with the subject as the old constituencies, and more so. The question has been discussed in all ways. It has been before the Courts, and discussed backwards and forwards throughout the country and in law-courts, and I should like to know how many of the new constituencies do not understand it a great deal better than the old ones. The principal provision in the Bill I should like to see eliminated is with regard to the Licensing Committees. I now come to the part of the Bill which says that if a license is taken away the licensee can throw up his lease. I think, myself, that that requires a little more safeguarding, because if a tenant wants to get rid of a lease he will commit a breach of the Act in order to effect that object: therefore that provision ought to be hedged round with some better safeguard. Now I come to the voting. The Bill says one-half of those on the roll must vote. Well, that, of course, is a good safeguard. Whether it is too much of a safeguard is a matter for discussion. It

is not the same as when you require one-half of the whole of the voters on the roll to vote in one direction. It is only half of those on the roll on both sides who must vote. Therefore it is not so prohibitive as the provision in the Municipal Corporations Act, by which one-half of the whole of the voters must vote in one direction to carry a resolution to borrow money. I do not want to take up the time of the Council in discussing this Bill any further. I hope the Council will not follow the lead of my honourable friend Dr. Pollen, but will allow this Bill to go into Committee, where we can endeavour to make it as perfect a Bill as possible.

The Hon. Mr. OLIVER.—I had no intention of speaking on this subject this afternoon; in fact, I did not know the Bill would come forward, and therefore I am somewhat unprepared to address myself to the subject in the way I should like. This Bill contains a very important principle, departing from that which has ruled up to this time in such matters. It introduces the principle of local veto. Now, Sir, we are governed under the representative system; those who make our laws and direct the administration of affairs are elected by a majority of the people—sometimes by a mere majority of those who vote. But, Sir, although the mere majority of those who vote are able to elect a representative, and to clothe him with the powers of a legislator, even if, through abstentions from voting, a small minority of the constituency return him, yet that representative is by no means free from the influence of all the other voters who may be on the roll. He is elected not to do an administrative act directly, but to sit with others in counsel in such a way as that the united wisdom of the entire representation of the country may be brought to bear. Although it may be very difficult to get a large number of the voters to go to the poll, and members are elected by a number which may, as I have said, be a minority, yet, as soon as any interesting subject is to be dealt with by Parliament, a large number of those who refrained from going to the poll spring into activity, and make their influence felt in such a way that the representatives of the people must take notice of them, although it is not by their votes they have been sent to the Legislature. Now, in reference to this proposal, it will be the introduction of administrative power exercised by the populace itself directly. That is a very important alteration, and I, for my own part, am disposed to question its wisdom. If, however, this proposal were accompanied by others which would have the effect of giving this great power of prohibition to a real majority of the electors in any district, my objections would be to a large extent removed. It is proposed by this measure to deprive the inhabitants of this country of a portion of the freedom which they now have. Well, when such a proposal as that is made, I think it is only fair to ask that a real majority of the inhabitants should be obtained to warrant such interference. If coercive mea-

tures are to be enforced with regard to the privileges and rights of a large portion of the community, it seems to me only just that it should be at least ascertained that a majority wish so to interfere, or else we may have the majority of the inhabitants coerced by the minority. That would be a reversal of what we understand by the principles of free government. It is proposed by this Bill to give the power of direct veto to three-fifths of one-half of the voters in a licensing district. It is necessary under its provisions that at least one-half of the voters in a district should vote in order to give any force to the decisions arrived at by voting. And it is proposed that, if three-fifths of this one-half vote in favour of the prohibition of the sale of alcoholic drinks in a district, no more drink shall be sold in the district. Well, now, three-fifths of a half equals three-tenths of the whole; so that seven-tenths may possibly be coerced in this matter by three-tenths; and then, when you consider that the whole of the inhabitants of the district are not on the roll, it becomes certain that the minority which might coerce the majority will be even smaller than three-tenths; and this decision is irrevocable for three years. Well, that is, in my opinion, a sufficient condemnation of the Bill. I know it has been said recently, in discussing another matter of importance in which we are engaged, that the supporters of the woman's franchise are not really and sincerely supporters of that franchise, but that they have some desire, by means of the woman's vote, to influence this licensing matter. Now, so far as I am concerned, as one of the supporters of the woman's franchise, it will be seen from the remarks which I have made that at least I am not one of those. I am very sorry this matter comes before us this afternoon. I should have desired to go more exhaustively into an examination of this Bill, but I shall be compelled, under the circumstances, to vote for the amendment of the Hon. Dr. Pollen.

The Hon. Mr. BOLT.—I would make another appeal to the Council to adjourn this debate. This is one of the most important questions that have come before us this session, and, as we know the Bill has been brought into this Parliament and into this Council in a very hasty manner, I do not think it is wise to deal with this important question in the hurried manner in which it is now proposed to deal with it. I move the adjournment of the debate.

The Hon. Sir G. S. WHITMORE.—Speaking to the question of the adjournment, I have only to say that if we adjourn and adjourn the debate till the end of the session it will come to exactly the same thing. This Bill has been brought down in defiance of the wishes of a very considerable number of people, and the only reason why the moderate party support it is that it is not quite so bad as some other proposals of the same character that have been brought forward. I hope the honourable gentleman will not be successful in getting it adjourned. We have had the Bill several days

under our consideration; it has been discussed in another place a great deal; it has attracted a great deal of attention in the country; and the Bill now before us, so far as we are led to believe, and as far as my judgment goes at all events, is a compromise between two extremes. I cannot see that this Bill is either necessary or fair, but it is a great deal less unfair than some of the proposals that have been before the country for some time past. In point of fact, there is no doubt about it, there has arisen within our midst a section of persons who are exceedingly dogmatic in their opinions, and very noisy in expressing them, and who allow nobody else to have any reason at all in any counter contentions—people who call themselves total prohibitionists or blue-ribbonists, or whatever they may be called; and they have become to a large extent a public nuisance. People who tell us we are to live upon this or upon that should not be tolerated. Some day we shall have a sort of vegetarian agitation, the promoters of which will tell us that we must not eat meat. There is just as much sense in that as to forbid us the use of spirituous liquors in moderation; and I must say that any reasonable measure short of the exaggerated proposals of some people, and which will to a certain extent meet the views of both sides, ought to be carried, and carried with as little discussion as possible. The longer we deal with this matter the more heated will be the discussions in the public prints; and the sooner we settle this in an amicable way the better it will be for the country.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—Speaking to the question of the adjournment, I appeal to the honour of this Council. I cannot ignore the fact brought forcibly under my notice that there has been an attempt made outside this Council to kill this Bill. The Government attach very great importance to this Bill—quite as much importance as to the Bill which is lower down on the Order Paper; and I trust that this burning question will be dealt with by this Council on its merits, and not on any side-issues, which I am sorry to say to-day's proceedings have shown to exist. I have no more to say at present, except to appeal to that sense of fair-play which has ever characterized this Council, and to ask that this question be dealt with on its merits. It is simply nonsense to say that honourable members have not had the opportunity of reading this Bill. It has been before the Council several days, and I undertake to say that members have read the Bill and thoroughly understand it.

The Hon. Dr. GRACE.—With regard to the appeal of the Hon. the Attorney-General, I beg to state that I have read the Bill, and I think I understand it thoroughly; but, though I understand the Bill thoroughly, some other honourable members do not. That is the way I view it, and I think it would be to the advantage of those who are interested in the Bill to have the adjournment. It is a complicated Bill, although it appears simple enough. I have studied it. Simple though it is, it is quite

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possible to misunderstand it. That being so, I do not know but that the best course to pursue would be to adjourn the debate. I came here prepared to support the measure, taking exception simply to clauses 24 and 25, which introduce an entirely new principle—that when a license is forfeited the landholder is to be the only person who will suffer. With the exception of these clauses, I think the Bill is a fair approach to a settlement of this question. There is no need to deal hastily with the Bill, and I think it would be to the advantage of the Government to have the Bill adjourned.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I intend to support the motion for the adjournment: not, as the Hon. the Attorney-General supposes, because I am opposed to the Bill as it is—

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I did not say you were.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—You said some tactics had been resorted to to-day here.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—There is no doubt about it.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I am quite unconscious of them.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—I did not charge the honourable gentleman with them. The honourable gentleman's conduct has always been fair and square to me.

The Hon. W. DOWNIE STEWART.—I was only speaking to some honourable gentlemen just before the Council met as to whether the Bill should be adjourned. As a matter of fact, I have had a copy of the Bill in my pocket for some days, but I was so busy with other matters that I had not time to consider it; and then, I was visiting a house on Saturday afternoon, and was asked for a copy of the Bill, and I gave my copy.

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I think it would be best to adjourn this debate. This is a most difficult Bill to study, and, although I have taken a great deal of pains to go over it, I have not yet been able to master it. I have given three or four hours to it. It may be that I am not so quick at picking up the details of a measure as some honourable members, but, at any rate, I think this Bill requires a great deal more attention. There are some clauses which might suit one part of the colony and not another—namely, clauses 24 and 25. For instance, when a license is taken away, the owner of a property, although he had no part at all in carrying on the hotel, is bound to pay valuation for improvements at the time. These are things which require a great deal of consideration. We must look into the law before we can decide whether this Bill is satisfactory or not. My own impression is that it will not be possible to work it. I do not think, in fact, if we adjourn the consideration of it until next session, the subject would at all suffer.

The Hon. Sir P. A. BUCKLEY.—How is it you have been lobbying about the Bill?

The Hon. Mr. REYNOLDS.—I deny that I have been lobbying. I have spoken to several members, but I have not gone behind any one's back. I do not do that. I have spoken to three or four members, and said I do not think it would be a good thing to pass the Bill this session, because it is evident to me that it did not receive that consideration at the hands of the Government which a Bill like this ought to have. Instead of the members of the Government dancing about electioneering, they ought to devote their attention to a Bill of this kind, and to be prepared to lay a perfect Bill before Parliament when it meets.

The Hon. Mr. PEACOCK.—I think the honourable member has proved that there is no occasion for an adjournment. He has shown us that he thoroughly understands the Bill, and where it might not work well. I think, therefore, the best thing we can do is to get the Bill into Committee as soon as possible.

The Council divided on the question, "That the debate be adjourned."

AYES, 22.

Acland	Jennings	Pharazyn
Bolt	Johnston	Reynolds
Bonar	Mantell	Stevens
Bowen	MacGregor	Stewart
Dignan	McCullough	Walker, L.
Grace	Oliver	Whyte
Hart	Ormond	Williams.
Jenkinson		

NOES, 17.

Barnicoat	McLean	Shrimski
Buckley	Montgomery	Swanson
Feldwick	Peacock	Walker, W. C.
Holmes	Pollen	Wahawaha
Kelly	Richardson	Whitmore.
Kerr	Rigg	

Majority for, 5.

Amendment carried.

Debate adjourned.

ELECTORAL BILL.

IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 61.—Seamen and commercial travellers to make declaration and claim for an elector's right.

The Hon. Mr. W. C. WALKER moved, That the words "or bushfeller" be inserted after the word "traveller" in line 3.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 16.

Acland	Mantell	Swanson
Bonar	McLean	Wahawaha
Feldwick	Richardson	Walker, L.
Grace	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Kelly	Shrimski	Whitmore.
Kerr		

NOES, 22.

Barnicoat	Holmes	McCullough
Bolt	Jenkinson	Montgomery
Buckley	Jennings	Oliver
Dignan	Johnston	Ormond
Hart	MacGregor	Peacock

Pharazyn	Stevens	Whyte
Pollen	Stewart	Williams.
Reynolds		

Majority against, 6.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. SWANSON moved, That the words "or gumdigger" be inserted after the word "traveller."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 15.

Acland	Mantell	Swanson
Bonar	McLean	Wahawaha
Feldwick	Richardson	Walker, L.
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Shrimski	Whitmore.

NOES, 22.

Barnicoat	Johnston	Pharazyn
Bolt	MacGregor	Pollen
Buckley	McCullough	Reynolds
Dignan	Montgomery	Stevens
Hart	Oliver	Stewart
Holmes	Ormond	Whyte
Jenkinson	Peacock	Williams.
Jennings		

Majority against, 7.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG moved, That the words "or men employed on co-operative works" be inserted after the word "traveller."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 15.

Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Reynolds	Wahawaha
Kelly	Richardson	Walker, L.
Kerr	Rigg	Walker, W. C.
Mantell	Shrimski	Whitmore.

NOES, 21.

Acland	Jennings	Peacock
Barnicoat	Johnston	Pharazyn
Bolt	MacGregor	Pollen
Buckley	McCulloch	Stevens
Dignan	Montgomery	Stewart
Hart	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

Majority against, 6.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, That the words "or lighthouse-keepers and their families" be inserted after the word "traveller."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 7.

Feldwick	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
Kerr	Swanson	Whitmore.
McLean		

NOES, 21.

Acland	Buckley	Jenkinson
Barnicoat	Dignan	Jennings
Bolt	Hart	Johnston

MacGregor	Ormond	Stevens
McCullough	Peacock	Stewart
Montgomery	Pharazyn	Whyte
Oliver	Pollen	Williams.

Majority against, 14.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Major WAHAWAHA moved, That the words "or a surveyor or an assistant" be inserted after the word "traveller."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted."

AYES, 12.

Bonar	McLean	Swanson
Feldwick	Richardson	Wahawaha
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kerr	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.

NOES, 16.

Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.
Johnston		

Majority against, 4.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. FELDWICK moved, That the clause be postponed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 18.

Bonar	Reynolds	Swanson
Feldwick	Richardson	Wahawaha
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kerr	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
McLean		

NOES, 18.

Acland	Johnston	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

Majority against, 5.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 64.—Vote may be given in any part of the colony.

The Hon. Mr. McLEAN moved, That the clause be postponed.

The Committee divided.

AYES, 18.

Bonar	Reynolds	Swanson
Feldwick	Richardson	Wahawaha
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kerr	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
McLean		

NOES, 18.

Acland	Johnston	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

Majority against, 5.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 85.—Poll to be by ballot. Hours of polling.

The Hon. Mr. RIGG moved, That the word "it," in line 1, be struck out, and the following words inserted in lieu thereof: "The ballot-papers shall be bound in books of convenient size, and shall be consecutively numbered. Each ballot-paper shall have a number printed on the back, and shall have attached a counterfoil with the same number printed on the face. At the time of voting the ballot-paper shall be stamped with an official mark and delivered to the voter within the polling-booth, and the number of such voter on the roll shall be marked on the counterfoil. The poll".

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 18.

Acland	Johnston	Pharazyn
Barnicoat	MacGregor	Pollen
Bolt	McCullough	Stevens
Buckley	Montgomery	Stewart
Dignan	Oliver	Whyte
Jenkinson	Ormond	Williams.

NOES, 13.

Bonar	Reynolds	Swanson
Feldwick	Richardson	Wahawaha
Kelly	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kerr	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
McLean		

Majority for, 5.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. JENKINSON moved, That the word "six," in line 27, be struck out, and that the word "seven" be inserted in lieu thereof.

The Committee divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 19.

Acland	MacGregor	Pollen
Barnicoat	McCullough	Richardson
Bolt	Montgomery	Stevens
Bonar	Oliver	Stewart
Buckley	Ormond	Whyte
Dignan	Pharazyn	Williams.
Johnston		

NOES, 12.

Feldwick	Kerr	Swanson
Jenkinson	McLean	Wahawaha
Jennings	Rigg	Walker, L.
Kelly	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.

Majority for, 7.

Amendment negatived.

The Hon. Mr. SHRIMSKI moved, That "one month" be inserted instead of "six months."

The Committee divided on the question, "That the words proposed to be omitted stand part of the clause."

AYES, 19.

Acland	Buckley	Johnston
Barnicoat	Dignan	Kelly
Bolt	Jenkinson	MacGregor

McCullough	Pharazyn	Stewart
Montgomery	Pollen	Whyte
Oliver	Stevens	Williams.
Ormond		

NOES, 8.

Bonar	Richardson	Walker, L.
Feldwick	Shrimski	Walker, W. C.
McLean	Swanson	

Majority for, 11.

Amendment negatived.

Progress reported.

The Council adjourned at five minutes to nine o'clock p.m.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

Tuesday, 5th September, 1893.

Third Readings—Bill discharged—Kumara Mines—Crofter Immigrants—Bush-firing—Kelso Bridge—School Libraries—Doyle—Mosgiel Courthouse—Government Employes' Wages—Reefton Mining Companies—Takaka—Collingwood Road—Photographing Prisoners—Manawatu River Bridge—Cheviot Road—Rabbit Nuisance—Government Insurance Rates of Interest—Federated Maori Assembly—Salvation Army—Adjournment—West Coast Settlement Reserves Bill—Ellesmere Lake Lands Bill—Shops and Shop-assistants Bill

Mr. SPEAKER took the chair at half-past two o'clock.

PRAYERS.

THIRD READINGS.

Post Office Bill, Civil Service Officers' Guarantee Bill, Stamp Bill.

BILL DISCHARGED.

Egmont County Bill.

KUMARA MINES.

Colonel FRASER brought up a report from the Goldfields and Mines Committee on the petition of Thomas F. Burn and others, and also on a petition from the Kumara Miners' Association, praying for a reduction in the price of water supplied for mining purposes. The Committee had no recommendation to make. He moved, That the report do lie on the table.

Mr. GUINNESS said he had an amendment to move. These petitions were from the residents of the Kumara district, and also from the miners in that district, asking that the Government would take into their favourable consideration the petitions they had presented to the House for a reduction in the price charged to the miners of that field for water. The matter was discussed by the Goldfields Committee in 1891-92, and during the present session. A petition from the same people came before the Goldfields Committee last session, and they recommended it to the favourable consideration of the House. In other words, they recommended that the Government should make some substantial or reasonable reduction of the excessive amounts that were charged for the water the Government were supplying to

the miners there. He would not take up the time of the House by going through the main facts of the case, but he contended that the decision which the Committee arrived at on those same petitions last week was quite contrary to what ought to have been arrived at, and to what would have been arrived at if all the members had been present. It was with a view of giving all the members an opportunity of being present that he moved the amendment that this report be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration. Some of the members, he believed, who voted on that occasion were not so fully cognisant of the facts as other members who had sat on the Committee for years; and the report of the Committee, to his mind, simply shelved the question, and threw the responsibility entirely on the Government. This question of the charge made to the miners throughout the colony for the supply of water was not a local question, but was really a national question. It was one that the House ought to seriously take into consideration, as it was never intended, when the money was borrowed for the purpose of constructing the several water-races, that there should be a large profit made out of them, any more than that a large profit should be made out of the railways. They were made for the public convenience, and for the encouragement and development of this particular industry that was affected by this heavy charge and burden being placed upon it; and he thought the Committee, on further inquiry, would be able to come to a different decision from that come to last week upon these petitions. Therefore, without taking up further time, he would move the amendment he had stated.

Mr. VALENTINE seconded the amendment, because he felt, as he had felt for many years, that the miners who were intimately associated with this matter were suffering a great wrong. They had brought petitions time after time to the House, and distinct recommendations had been made to the Government to give favourable consideration to their request. But, so long as the Minister of Mines was at the head of affairs, he feared there was very little likelihood of the miners of Kumara receiving that attention which he thought their case deserved. There could be no doubt that the Government should not make the large profit—and it had been stated by the honourable gentleman himself that they had been making a large profit out of this particular water-race—out of this work which they were making, and that a considerable reduction ought to be made to encourage the miners in the development of the claims in that district. He was aware that the Government did give free water for prospecting purposes, but that was not sufficient. What the miners wanted was a reduction in the permanent charge for water. They were quite prepared to pay something reasonable, but they were not prepared to pay the heavy rates which were demanded of them; and it seemed to be useless to send down such representations as recommending the matter to the favourable consideration of the Govern-

ment, because in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred where that was done the matter was shelved. He did not know whether he was at liberty to mention a particular petition which had been reported on that afternoon; otherwise he would appeal to the Government on behalf of another petitioner—namely, Mr. Revell, a Resident Magistrate, who had been a very old and tried servant of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman must not go into that case.

Mr. VALENTINE said, with regard to these particular claims of the Kumara miners, he thought the Government should do something. He remembered that last year, when the Minister was replying to a question, he said that if the other water-races were taken into account the yield was not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. That had, however, nothing to do with it. There might be certain circumstances in connection with certain water-races which brought the percentage down to less than a quarter; but there was no sufficient reason why the men whose case was now under consideration should suffer for the benefit of people outside the district. They ought to be treated with that consideration which, he thought, their unfortunate circumstances entitled them to. He hoped the Government would give a little more consideration to the recommendations of this Committee than they had done before.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Committee recommend nothing.

Mr. VALENTINE said he was aware of that, but that did not seem right, and that was why he supported the amendment referring the matter back to the Committee, so that further evidence might be brought to bear upon it.

Mr. O. H. MILLS said, as one representing a goldfields constituency, he was rather surprised to find this petition come up again year after year. He was pleased to hear the honourable member for the Grey acknowledge that this was a national question, and not a local one, and in that light he hoped the House would look upon it. According to the information given to the Committee the miners' wages in the locality referred to were averaging £3 13s. a week. He was sorry to say there were very few miners in his neighbourhood who could earn on the average more than £1 15s. a week, and he did think that, until the other parts of the colony were put on a more equal footing with regard to assistance from Government to aid prospecting the head-waters of the Wakamarina, and other places, and that kind of work, they ought not to reduce these water-rates. They were all quite willing—he was quite willing himself, and he was sure others were—to assist the mining industry, which meant giving the miners every benefit that could be given reasonably: at the same time, they ought not to give to any one section of miners anything in preference to others. They must be just before being generous. And, if it could be shown by the department that these miners were averaging £3 13s. a week, then he considered they ought to be very well satis-

fied. It had been said that this information was not correct, as to their being able to earn that amount; but the petition itself said that the miners were not able to say what their average earnings were until they had certain information from the department.

Mr. GUINNESS said that was not the case. They said they could not tell until they knew exactly the quantity of gold that had been produced.

Mr. C. H. MILLS thought honourable members would understand by that that the miners were looking forward to the report from the department to ascertain what gold had been produced from the field within the last twelve months: and it appeared to him, at first, that they were almost afraid to say how much their earnings were. He had no objection to the report being referred back to the Committee, but he did not see, when the petition came before them the other day, that they had any new evidence, or anything like such exhaustive information as was placed before the Committee in 1891, when the whole question was thoroughly threshed out. He did not blame the honourable member for the Grey for moving the amendment; but, at the same time, he thought the members who represented the various goldfields must look upon the matter, as the honourable gentleman himself acknowledged should be done, from a national standpoint.

Mr. ALLEN said he did not see how the Committee could have come to any other conclusion than they had come to. If the petition were considered by itself, then in other cases where miners were using Government water those cases might not be considered at all, for this reason: It was quite true that in this particular spot the Government were making a small profit out of the water; but in other places they were making no profit at all; and, taking the whole of the water-races all over New Zealand, he thought the fact should be shown that no profit was being made from them. If this water were reduced to the miners at Kumara, what would be the position as regards the other miners? The Government would be able to say of other places, "We are making no profit out of the water anywhere, and therefore we do not see our way to make a reduction." The fact was, the miners at Kumara were making £3 13s. per week, according to the Mines Report; and if honourable members looked at that report they would find that miners elsewhere were making very much less—in some cases, indeed, under £2. If a reduction were to be made here a reduction must necessarily be made elsewhere, and therefore, in the interests of the miners generally, the Committee had made the report it was their duty to make. The report did not say that the Government were not to reduce; they simply said the question was one of policy, and the honourable member for the Grey used the very same argument himself when he said it was a national question. The Government, if they thought fit, could make any reductions at Kumara or elsewhere; but,

if the House were to stultify itself and say that the miners at Kumara were to have a reduction, and not other miners, he did not think that would be at all fair. He thought that claims for reductions elsewhere were very much stronger than in the case of Kumara. What happened at Kumara? Was no encouragement given them there? They had free water for prospecting and for opening out claims, and surely it could hardly be said that, under those circumstances, the Government and the country were not doing all they could do to encourage mining. He was as anxious as any one to see it encouraged, but he did not want to see one spot favoured and all others shut out from encouragement. He thought the Committee had made a report such as the circumstances required, and if the question was to be considered at all it should be considered as a question of Government policy, as dealing with all water-races.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE must confess that he was never more surprised than to hear the statement with which the honourable gentleman commenced his speech just now. He said the Committee, in his opinion, could not possibly have come to any other decision than that to which they had come. Now, as a matter of fairness, he wished to draw the attention of the House to an important matter—to the terms of the report, which were as follows:—

"That, after due consideration, the Committee are of opinion that, as the matter of fixing the price of water is a question of policy which should be decided by the Government, this Committee has no recommendation to make."

That was the report of the Committee. Now, he would ask the House to recall for a moment the order of reference by which petitions and every other matter were referred to a Goldfields Committee. The order of reference was as follows: "That a Goldfields and Mines Committee, consisting of thirteen members, be appointed, to which shall be referred all matters relating to mining, and all Bills relating to mines," *et cetera*. This was a mere detail of matters relating to mining—not a question of policy. It had been presented by the petitioners to the House, and the House had delegated the matter to a Committee, and the Committee actually reported that, as it was a question of policy, the Government alone should decide it. Why on earth should it have been referred to the Committee at all? The price of water was no question of policy: but even if it were—

Sir R. STOUT.—Hear, hear.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said the honourable member said, "Hear, hear."

An Hon. MEMBER.—He means water-drinking.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he was beginning to think, considering the part the honourable member took in the matter of framing the report, that it would be better if he took to something stronger than water. Could the honourable gentleman recall the fact that the gold duty—which was, as everybody would

acknowledge, a question of large policy—was abolished upon repeated recommendations from the same Committee? It was the Committee that did the business. They so often reported favourably on the abolition of the gold duty that this House at last took the matter under consideration and the duty was abolished. That was a question of policy. But the fact remained that, if this petition had been such a question of policy as was involved in the construction of water-races all over the country—a question of the expenditure of a large sum of public money for the construction of water-races for the first time—it would certainly have been referred to the Mines Committee in order to give its opinion to the House. The House then might accept the recommendation of the Committee, or it might reject it. But to say that petitioners complaining of the price of water should not have it considered by the Committee because it was a question of policy, was only another way of saying that petitioners need never send in any petition for relief. An honourable member said they need not; but the needlessness of it only commenced from the sending-in of this report, for hitherto petitioners have always believed that if they sent in a petition it would, at any rate, be fairly considered by the Committee to whom it was referred. Now, however, they must see there was not the slightest use sending in any petition. It must be borne in mind that an individual might send a petition to the House, or to the head of the Government, or to the Minister of some particular department. There had always been a broad distinction between these petitions. When a petition was sent to a Minister, he regarded it in the light of a letter, and sent his answer; but when a petition was sent to the House the House was presumed to consider it. But what was now done was to declare that the House would take no cognisance whatever of the matter, but would refer petitions—for, after all, petitions were on questions of policy, as a rule—they would simply refer petitions to the head of the Government. That was putting petitioners in a most unfair position. In his own district there were Government water-races, and at the present moment the price of water was such as to almost exclude the possibility of fully developing the mines in that particular locality. Petitions were now coming in from that district to the House; but what now would be the use of them? Under the circumstances he might as well recommend his constituents to cease petitioning, and, instead, to send a letter to the Premier. It was useless sending petitions to the House, since the Committee declared that it was not its business to interfere; they might just as well themselves refer the matter to the Government at once. He must say the position was a wrong one—that it was placing the House in a false position, and that the Committee was recommending something which would destroy the right of petition to Parliament. He considered the House, on this occasion, ought to refer the question back to the Committee on the ground that the Committee had not de-

liberated at all on the subject-matter of the petition. It ought to go back, in order that the Committee might be in a position, after inquiring into the petition, to guide the House to a correct decision. They did not know anything about the position of the Kumara miners. He understood the Government were making 10 per cent. out of the miners in that district; and, at any rate, if the House ultimately came to the conclusion that it ought not to assent to the prayer of the petitioners, nevertheless that conclusion ought to be arrived at after it had had the benefit of the deliberations of the Committee. He intended to vote to send the report back to the Committee, and he hoped that would be carried.

Mr. FERGUS said that when this case was under the consideration of the Goldfields Committee he was not present; and the reason for his absence, as he had explained to the Chairman afterwards, was that he had not received any notice of the meeting. The notices of these various Committee meetings were hawked around the House, and were sometimes left amongst the papers on one's desk, and so might be overlooked. He thought that, like all other communications, they ought to be put in the pigeonholes of members. As he was not present at the meeting, he had not had a chance of taking part in the decision of the Committee. But he entirely dissented from the finding of the Committee, and was extremely sorry to find a man like his honourable friend the member for Bruce taking up the attitude he had taken up, for he had always thought that honourable gentleman had strong sympathy with the miners, and that he appreciated the position of the Goldfields Committee more than now seemed to be the case. It was perfectly true, as the honourable member for Mount Ida had said, that every reform introduced into the mining-laws of the colony had emanated not from the Minister of Mines directly, but from the Goldfields Committee. He could not charge his memory with a single reform which had emanated from the Minister of Mines unless it had first been agitated for by the miners' associations, then brought up by petition before the House, and subsequently reported upon by the Goldfields Committee. The abolition of the gold duty, which he himself had carried as Minister of Mines, had first been broached in the miners' associations and in the progress committees on the West Coast and in the goldfields of Otago, and it culminated in the passing of the law five or six years ago. Now, with respect to the claim of the Kumara miners, when he was at Kumara he had had the privilege of seeing a great number of these miners, and he could not find in any case that their earnings came to the amount that had been mentioned by various speakers during the debate; and their expenses, he knew, were very heavy. The House, in its wisdom, had given considerable protection to manufactures in this country; it had imposed duties to enable manufacturers to compete against imported articles. Every day

Mr. M. J. S. Mackenzie

the Minister of Lands was bringing in some amendment of the Land Act, to help agriculturists and small settlers. But what were they doing at the present time with regard to the mining interests? He was not speaking in favour of the mining interests because he wanted the vote of the miners, because, as the House knew, he did not intend to come back to Parliament; but he must say he thought they ought to consider the mining interest in a fair and liberal spirit. Every day the claims were getting worked out; the men were growing older, and they were able to make but little provision for their declining years; and he must say it would be a great shame if the House imposed disabilities upon miners who could ill afford to bear them. He was sorry indeed that the Committee had presented this report, and thought it would have been far better to have taken a bold stand and to have told the House that the miners had no grievance and that the price of water should not be reduced. But, on the other hand, if the Committee thought the miners were paying too much they ought to have recommended a reduction. The whole crux of the question, he believed, lay in this fact: that there was on the Kumara Goldfield another water-race, which was owned by a private individual, and, if the Government reduced the price of water from the Government race, then this individual would suffer; and so, in order to protect this individual,—a Mr. Holmes,—the price of water in the Government race was to be kept up to the miners on the Kumara Goldfield.

Mr. C. H. MILLS asked how the earnings of these miners compared with the earnings of other miners throughout New Zealand.

Mr. FERGUS did not care whether they compared favourably with the average earnings of miners throughout the colony or not. What he wanted to know was, whether they were earning more than sufficient to keep body and soul together—whether they were earning fair wages—that was what he wanted to know. When the miners came before that House and made certain representations, members were bound to believe them; and, from what he had heard, he would venture to say that the average earning was not so great as that paid to the most humble labourers in the service of the colony; and the expenses to which they were put, as every one acquainted with the matter knew, were far out of proportion to those of any other class of tradesmen in the colony. He thought it would be wise to refer the matter back to the Committee to bring up a definite report, so that they should not shield themselves under such a resolution as that now submitted.

Mr. MCGOWAN thought the time of the House would be saved by agreeing to the amendment upon the ground that the honourable gentleman had given—that there was fresh evidence to be placed before the Committee. The question of the amount of money earned per man was, he thought, hardly included in the case. The present was, perhaps, hardly the proper time to enter upon a full discussion of

the question, although he felt sorely tempted to enter upon it. The question of reduction of water-charges to these miners was one that ought to be fully considered, and, if the mover of the amendment put the additional information before the Committee, he had no doubt it would be fairly considered. He had been informed that the earnings mentioned were the gross earnings, and if that were so it was a very fallacious estimate to go upon. He would support the amendment for sending the report back to the Committee.

Mr. SEDDON said he did not think the House would consider he was treating it fairly if he allowed what had been stated to go without saying a few words upon it. The Government in this matter had been resisting political pressure for some time past. The late Minister of Mines had done the same, and the Minister of Mines before him had done the same. There had been continuous pressure brought to bear for some years past upon the respective Ministers of Mines to get the price of water reduced. He could not understand why the honourable member for Wakatipu, when Minister of Mines, had not, during the three years he was in office, done that which he now advocated.

Mr. FERGUS said, would the honourable gentleman allow him to say that he did make a reduction, by granting certain free water? and it was only after he had ceased to be Minister that the petitions had come into the House.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable member's memory must be very defective. The man who gave free water, who laid down the rules under which the water was given, was the present leader of the Opposition.

Mr. FERGUS said that he (Mr. Fergus) had extended them.

Mr. SEDDON said his honourable friend had not extended them, for, strange to say, the rules which were brought into existence in 1882 by Mr. Rolleston were the rules which guided the Manager to this day.

Mr. FERGUS.—No, they are not;—he meant to say, that was a mistake.

Mr. SEDDON said there had been one alteration made, and the Minister who made it was the Hon. Mr. Larnach, and he had reduced the water-rate from £2 10s. to £2, but conditionally that the water-money was paid in advance. That was the only alteration that had taken place ever since he could remember, and he thought they would admit that he ought to know something about mining at Kumara. When it was announced that he (Mr. Seddon) was to be Minister of Mines some of the miners of Kumara said they would get water for next to nothing; there was great jubilation. He did not say there was not perhaps a little selfishness in it. He would say what had happened, and he would, perhaps, be doing justice to the honourable member for Wakatipu in saying there was a general instruction given, he believed, to the Manager that, instead of standing on the regulations, when water was plentiful, and when it was a question of a poor claim, extra water might be given. Evidence was

taken from the different claim-owners, and they found that the earnings averaged from £1 10s. up to £10 per week. Then, later on, evidence was taken before the Goldfields Committee—a deputation came up to Wellington—and the evidence was to be found in the records of the Committee, and he thought they brought down the average earnings of the miners to something over £3 per week. But in respect to the poor claims—that was, ground that was being worked where the men were only making small wages—in those cases, the Manager, on being satisfied, from the washings-up, or from two or three washings-up, that the earnings of the men were only such as he had mentioned—£1 10s. a week, or something of that kind—had a discretionary power to give these poor claims what was known as “a free washing”—that was, to charge them nothing at all for the water. But those who were most clamorous to get a reduction in the price of water were those who had secured large areas of the best ground at Kumara, and who wanted to work the land with cheap water, and make a substantial profit. He did not blame them. But they might apply the same argument to our railways as was advanced in regard to these water-races. The Government looked upon our water-races as being part of the public works constructed under our public-works policy. Supposing the Government had control of the railways, and the question was referred to a Committee that the tariff on the railways, or on a section of the railways, should be reduced,—which would, of course, have an application over the whole of the railway tariffs in the colony,—what would the House say? What would any Committee say? They would say at once that it was a question of policy, and should be dealt with by the Government of the day, who were responsible. That would be the argument, and probably that was the argument that had been used in the Committee which had dealt with this question. He (Mr. Seddon) did not vote when the question was before the Committee. Nothing, he might say, would make him more popular than for the Government to give way. Kumara was in the electorate which he intended to contest at the next election, and, if he wanted to secure his election, and make himself a “jolly good fellow,” and have a triumphant procession and hearty welcome on his arrival at Kumara, all the Government had to do was to reduce the price of the water and meet the wishes of the petitioners. What would be said by honourable members in that case? They would say that he was not a person to be intrusted with the position of Minister of the Crown. Then, they were told that the reduction in the price of water was refused because some private interests were involved. There was no doubt that was laid down by one Minister of Mines—that the two races, namely, the Government race and the private race, should be worked together. It had been felt that, if the private water-race owner reduced the price of water, his doing so would force the hand of the Government; and he (Mr. Seddon) thought

Mr. Seddon

some arrangement had been entered into in consequence. He thought, however, the the Government should charge what was fair to those purchasing water from the State. But he would put this to the House: If they looked at the amount expended last year on water-race extension—he might mention that they had to extend the races year by year as the ground was being worked out—they had to keep increasing the expenditure for the extension of the branch and main races, and in the construction of main tail-races. The House practically, last year, voted £5,000 or £6,000 for water-race extension. That extension was going on, and now they were asked this year—

Mr. GUINNESS.—Not this race; nothing to do with this race.

Mr. SEDDON said, at all events, Parliament was asked for a sum of money to be placed upon the estimates for water-race extension. These extensions were going on in that district. Then, the race at Mount Ida had fallen into such disrepair that it was impossible to get sufficient water down to the miners to work with. What did the House do? It spent some £600, he thought, in the purchase of prior rights of water, and £1,500 in repairing the race; and the men were getting a much better supply than they were getting before. What he complained of was this: that before the Government had finished the expenditure petitions were coming to the House for a reduction in the price of water. All he said was that, if they were to continue that policy, it would mean that Parliament would refuse to vote any money for water-races,—which were a very desirable class of work on our goldfields,—and that would be a very grave mistake to make. Where claims were paying well they should keep up the price of the water to a fair thing; and where there were men working poor ground, and where they required to have ground prospected, they should give free water and carry out the very wise conditions introduced by Mr. Rolleston when Minister of Mines. The other day he read in the *Kumara Times* that a mass meeting of miners was called to discuss this question of the reduction of the price of water, and, when the Chairman called upon miners to come forward and say a few words in support of the proposal, not a single miner came forward, although he believed there were many in the room.

Mr. GUINNESS.—The honourable gentleman knows why.

Mr. SEDDON said he was stating what he had read in the *Kumara Times* newspaper. There was no gainsaying the fact—that not a single miner came forward to support the proposal. The only speakers were the Mayor, a member of the County Council, and Mr. Hay, he thought. The miners were a manly, straightforward, and outspoken class of men, and if there were any strong feeling on the subject they would very soon have taken the opportunity of stating their grievances, and of asking Parliament to redress them. They would not even find the means of sending a delegate

to Wellington to give evidence before the Committee. He might point out that a very large area of ground had been secured by some of the men, and no other men could get at it. It was these claimholders who clamoured to have the price of water reduced. As he had said, in the case of poor ground they granted free water. Under these circumstances, he did not think there was any serious grievance. He wished honourable members to remember this: If they made a reduction in one case there would be applications for similar reductions in others. There were the Nelson Creek, Argyle, and Mount Ida Water-races, and in these cases a corresponding reduction would naturally be demanded. For instance, they had leased the Nelson Water-race. If they reduced the rates in one part of the colony, the lessees would claim, very reasonably, compensation, because he would be bound, in the face of the Government making the reduction in one place, to reduce the price at that race. He thought it would be much better for the Government, and much better for the miners, that they should go on extending the water-races, and be in a position to grant free water for prospecting and opening up new ground. He might say this: that if the Government were to be relieved of responsibility in this matter he would not object. If the House was prepared to say the price of water should be reduced it would relieve him from responsibility. He might remark that he was well known to the miners, the great bulk of whom were his political supporters; and he liked the men at Kumara—he might also say that many of them were his personal friends. If, as he had said, he were relieved of this responsibility, he would not complain. He should not object to this being referred back to the Committee. He should like the fullest information to be got; and when the Committee reported again, and they had further evidence, if it were shown, to the House that they should take this matter in hand, and come to a conclusion upon it, all he had to say was that he should welcome that time. But, in the meantime, from circumstances which were within his knowledge, and knowing, as he did, the difficulties besetting the question, he would not be justified in taking upon himself to make this reduction. With an election pending, with an election shortly coming off, if the Government could say, "The Goldfields Committee have no recommendation to make, and the Government thereupon, under these circumstances, have decided to reduce the price of water," it would be a most popular step to take; but if he wanted to place himself before the country with an excuse for taking such a step he should let this matter go back to the Goldfields Committee, let the Committee recommend that the price of the water be reduced, and then he could make that an excuse for saying, "As the Goldfields Committee have recommended the reduction, the Government have taken the matter into consideration, and the reduction will take place accordingly." He did not know what the honourable member for Mount Ida wanted. He questioned whether

there would have been this advocacy of the Kumara miners and the great interest taken in them had it not been that the Naseby miners had a petition on the way; and if they reduced in one case they must in the other. He forgot to say that they had from Kumara now an application for the construction of No. 4 Main Tail-race, to cost £4,000; they had an application for No. 5, at a cost of £4,000: that was £8,000. They had the extension of Callaghan's, another £4,000. That was £12,000. They had applications for extensions of works in connection with these races. Their receipts last year were about £4,000 over and above the working-expenses. They contemplated spending £1,000 in the No. 4 Main Tail-race. The extension of the Callaghan's race would absorb the whole of their year's takings. Of course, if there was to be a reduction in the price of the water it would be impossible for them to go on with the extension of the water-races and the construction of the other works mentioned. Reduction in the price of the water meant stoppage of the extension of works.

Mr. McLEAN would support the sending-back of this report to the Committee for various reasons. First, the Government had made a profit of 10 per cent. Now, if the Government were making a profit of 10 per cent., in about ten years they would have recovered all their capital; they would have got the net capital. The Premier had just stated that he had represented Kumara off and on for at least eighteen years. He (Mr. McLean) knew that a great deal of gold was obtained from that field. He did not know how much, but he knew what the return was from some districts. If the miners took a thousand pounds' worth of gold out of the ground and sold that to the banks, the colony was £1,000 richer; Parliament ought, therefore, to encourage gold-mining in every respect, on that ground. Another reason why this petition should be sent back was that the miners should have some reduction, and if the Government were making 10 per cent. they could afford to make that reduction. It had been stated that the men earned £3 10s. 1d. per week; but had it been stated how much of these earnings represented expenses? The Government did not supply picks, shovels, dynamite, and other things necessary; and it was more than likely that 20 per cent. of the gross earnings was spent in that way. And, talking about having to raise the price on the Mokihinu, Nelson Creek, and Argyle Races, the honourable gentleman knew that all those races had been abandoned, and it was of no use raising the price on an abandoned race.

Mr. SEDDON said the honourable gentleman knew nothing at all about it. The Nelson Creek Race was let.

Mr. McLEAN said, Yes, for a peppercorn.

Mr. SEDDON said they were not abandoned.

Mr. McLEAN said they were next door to it.

One race was let at a peppercorn.

Mr. SEDDON said the Nelson Creek Race was let at £75 13s. 4d. a year. It cost the colony £50,000.

Mr. McLEAN said, Exactly. The honourable member must know that in mining he could not have everything his own way, and that every claim did not pay well. The other races he alluded to, and which he said ought to get a reduction, had practically not been working. If there was plenty of water, then let them be reduced: the more water the more gold. If there was a limited supply—say, forty head only, and that could only be used at a reduction—then that might be objected to. If the Moki-hinui, Nelson Creek, and Argyle Races would pay men even small wages it would be in the interests of the colony to let them have the water for nothing rather than have the gold lying in the ground. The miners were entitled to a great deal of consideration. There they were, in the back country, working from year to year—getting old and decrepid—a great many getting rheumatism, and so on—and, if they only earned £2 a week, they could not have much left after paying expenses. Even if they earned £3 10s. a week, that was not very much, seeing that they had to work day and night—very often Sunday and Saturday; and these men were working at a great disadvantage. He had worked all night himself at mining, and knew what it was, and he never begrudged a miner good earnings when working under such circumstances. He hoped the House would take the matter into consideration, and make such a reduction in the price of water as they could afford. With regard to the extension of Callaghan's, and the other extensions, the proposal meant this: the extension of the race to open up more ground. Therefore the more ground that was opened up the greater would be the receipts for water. They ought to be very glad to have extensions made. It would be very advisable that there should be plenty of extensions, so long as there was plenty of ground ahead to meet the extensions. He hoped the report would be sent back to the Committee.

Mr. BRUCE said he did not speak with as much knowledge of this subject as honourable gentlemen who had preceded him, but the remarks just made by the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) led him to the conclusion that what the honourable gentleman argued was that, in consequence of the miners being engaged in such an occupation, they ought to be subsidised at the expense of the State. That was the conclusion to be drawn from the argument advanced by the honourable gentleman. He thought the Premier deserved credit for the stand he had taken in this matter. This report had opened up a very large question, that question being as to whether this construction of water-races had been a profitable expenditure of public money. He was inclined to believe, from what he had heard that afternoon, that it had been an unprofitable expenditure. They heard of some water-races costing as much as £50,000 being abandoned, and of others not paying a quarter, and others a sixteenth per cent. Where there was a race which would permit of a fair price being paid for the water,

that price should be laid on. It was a question for consideration whether payable races should be made to pay for those which were not payable. He thought the Premier had taken up a very proper stand in the matter, and really there was no analogy, as the honourable member for the Grey tried to make out, between these races and railways. Railways were for all time, but these races were on ground that was being rapidly worked out, and, in his opinion, such a charge should be made as would extinguish the original cost in the course of time. He just wished to say, in conclusion, that he would vote in the direction of sending the report back to the Committee, and for this reason: that, whilst he thought it was quite true the Premier had taken up a proper stand in reference to the matter, still, seeing the order of reference, it was the duty of the Committee under these circumstances to come down with a more specific report. For that reason he would vote for sending it back.

Amendment to strike out the words agreed to.

On the question being put, That the words proposed to be inserted be so inserted,

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE said he was not going to open up the debate. He had not liked to interrupt the Premier, but he was desirous of correcting one point.

Mr. SPEAKER said the honourable gentleman could not do that at that stage.

Words proposed to be inserted agreed to, and report referred back to the Committee.

CROFTER IMMIGRANTS.

On the motion of Mr. W. KELLY, it was ordered, That there be laid before this House copies of the correspondence that passed between Mr. George Vesey Stewart and the late Sir Harry Atkinson during the months of December, January, and February, 1887 and 1888, referring to the introduction of crofter immigrants.

BUSH-FIRING.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked the Government, Whether they will, this session, introduce a Bill dealing with bush-firing? This matter was one which, he thought, should engage the attention of the Government with the view of framing some regulations regarding bush-fires. A great responsibility was incurred through fires spreading to adjoining properties, and something ought to be done in the way of regulation. As bush-settlements were extending over both Islands, the matter became more urgent every day.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said some inquiries had been made by the department as to whether it would be advisable to make such regulations; and it had been found, in the first place, that legislation was required in order to enable the regulations to be made. He was afraid, from inquiries that had been made and the information that had been obtained, that it was almost impossible this session to pass any legislation that would be satisfactory. Still, the department would continue to make inquiries, and

might be able to hit upon something that would suit the purpose, and perhaps next session they might bring the matter before the House. At present the Government could not see their way to doing anything in that direction.

KELSO BRIDGE.

Mr. T. MACKENZIE asked, Will the Government place a sum of money on the estimates to assist in the erection of a bridge over the Waipahi River and Pomahaka River at Kelso? This was a matter he would like the Minister of Lands, if possible, to take into his favourable consideration. These were two rather dangerous rivers, and one, the Waipahi, ran across the line of the main highway. The people of the district were willing to help considerably towards the construction of a bridge over it, but they were unable to furnish sufficient funds for the whole work. The county had borrowed up to its utmost limit, and was unable to secure any money for the purpose. With regard to the bridge at Kelso, that ought to be constructed at a very early date. Very frequently, indeed, it was impossible for the settlers to cross the river with their drays, or even to ford it with their horses. Both the Kelso and the Waipahi people had special claims for consideration, as the Government had received a fair return from the sales of land in those localities. Therefore he hoped the Minister would be able to do something towards the work.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the question of bridging these two rivers was simply a local matter, which should be attended to by the people of the district. If it were admitted that the Government of the colony could be called on to put up bridges in such places as these, where local government was established—wealthy districts, too—and where there were no Crown lands to be opened up by the making of bridges, they would require a million of money in order to deal with similar applications from all parts of the country. He was afraid that he could not offer the honourable member any assistance.

SCHOOL LIBRARIES.

Mr. WILSON asked the Postmaster-General, If he will make a concession to school libraries by allowing parcels of books for them to be carried free by post?

Mr. WARD was sorry he could not see his way to do this. If it were done in this case it would require to be done in many other cases as well, and as the carriage of parcels by the department was now very cheap he could not see his way to do what was asked.

— DOYLE.

Mr. HALL-JONES asked the Minister of Justice, If his attention has been called to a case recently heard before two Justices of the Peace at Timaru, when a man named Doyle was sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for using obscene language; and will he obtain from the presiding Justices the reason why so heavy a sentence was imposed?

Mr. CARROLL said the attention of the Government had not till now been called to the matter, but the convicting Justices had been called upon for a report.

MOSGIEL COURTHOUSE.

Mr. CARNCROSS asked the Minister of Justice, If he will inquire into the necessity that exists for providing proper Courthouse accommodation for Mosgiel, with the view of having a suitable building erected? The fact was that there was scarcely any accommodation whatever. When Justices were sitting on a case they were so close to the strangers who came in that it was impossible for them to hold a consultation on the case they were trying without the spectators hearing it. He might suggest that when the Government made inquiry into the matter they might see whether it would not be advisable to have the post-office and Court accommodation all in one building.

Mr. CARROLL said the Court was held in the Council Chamber, and no representations had been received with regard to further accommodation being required. Last year sixteen civil and fifty-three criminal cases were heard there. The Resident Magistrate had been asked to report, and the matter would be considered, and the suggestion of the honourable gentleman would be taken into consideration.

GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' WAGES.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Premier, Whether he will bring about a reform during the present session that has been asked for by thousands in the employment of the Government—namely, that their wages or salaries shall be paid to them fortnightly instead of monthly? His attention had been drawn to the matter by—he did not think he would be exaggerating in saying—some hundreds of women who had control of the commissariat department of their families. It had been intimated to him that, in consequence of the payments being monthly, seeing that they had no margin to come and go upon, they had to go into debt for five or six weeks. They all knew that when people got into debt they were under the control of those to whom they were indebted, and were unable to lay out their money to the best advantage by going to the cheapest market. He trusted the Minister, who was a sincere reformer, would do something in this direction if he could.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said the wages for roadmen had been paid monthly, and none of them had made any request to be paid oftener. He supposed that the men on public works were paid in the same way. He might tell the honourable gentleman that it would add considerably to the cost of the works to have them paid oftener. In most instances the money had to be paid in outlying districts, far away from banks, and the money had to be looked after and safely carried, and it would be necessary to have a staff of men always on the road to carry it if the payments were made oftener.

Mr. TAYLOR thought the Minister had misunderstood the question. He (Mr. Taylor) had

said nothing about roadworks. There were hundreds of men in the workshops in the towns, who ought to be paid fortnightly, notwithstanding there might be some inconvenience in it. The answer was not in accordance with the question, and he hoped on a future occasion the Minister would give a comprehensive reply to a comprehensive question.

REEFTON MINING COMPANIES.

Sir R. STOUT asked the Minister of Mines,—

(1) If he will state to the House the evidence that led him to sanction the publication in the Mines Report, page 80, of the following statements regarding the Reefton district: viz., "The ground was first principally taken up by people residing in the place, who then formed a company, and received a certain number of promoters' shares, fully paid up, the outside shareholders having to pay the whole of the calls; while the dividends were distributed amongst the contributory shareholders and promoters"; and (2) what steps he intends to take so that the erroneous statement may be withdrawn? He put the question because there had been a great deal of excitement about the statement. He had personal knowledge that it was not the case, because he knew the people in Reefton had paid calls.

Mr. SEDDON said, in reading the paragraph himself, he considered that a construction had been placed upon it which was certainly never intended by the Inspector of Mines. That gentleman had been engaged at Brunerton, and on his return he asked him to look into the matter, and send a reply. As the matter was somewhat important he would read the reply; it was as follows:—

"With reference to the paragraph on page 80 of the Mines Report, I desire to show that my remarks were never intended to throw any slight upon the people residing in the district of Reefton; but, on the contrary, I endeavoured to show that, although many persons, especially those residing in different parts of the colony, had lost money in mining ventures in that district, it was not due to the actual moneys paid into companies for calls, but it was due more to trafficking in shares. The total amount of calls paid, as far as can be ascertained, since the field was first opened is £291,028 14s. 4d., while the amount of dividends paid is £510,596 16s., showing a surplus of dividends paid over calls amounting to £219,568 1s. 8d.

"The official returns furnished by the managers of the different companies in the Reefton district for publication in the *Gazette* at the beginning of the present year show that the value of scrip given to shareholders for which no money was paid amounted to £149,631 5s., while the actual money paid in calls amounted to £172,415 18s. 11d. Accordingly, when I remarked that outside shareholders paid the calls, I meant it to be understood that the further development of the district depended upon capital to be provided by persons other than the promoters of the companies, or persons who held paid-up shares. It will be thus seen from the official state-

ments of the managers, as required by 'The Mining Companies Act, 1891,' that shares to the value of £149,631 5s. were given to shareholders on which no money was paid, and that the total amount of money actually paid up in calls was £172,415 18s. 11d., making a total of £322,047 3s. 11d. on which dividends were paid.

"I did not infer that the people in the Reefton district had not paid calls. I am well aware that many of them have paid calls to large amounts, and no doubt many of them have lost considerable sums of money in mining companies. But what I maintain is that persons who received paid-up shares in companies as promoters did not lose anything on those shares, although they may have taken up a certain number of subscribers' shares and lost on them. These are the explanations of the paragraph in my report to which exception has been taken by the Reefton people."

He regretted very much that the statement in the report had been taken in the spirit it had been. He felt sure, and he assured the House, that the intention of the Inspector of Mines was to help mining enterprise, and not to cause the people not to invest; and he hoped this explanation would be satisfactory.

Mr. McLEAN moved the adjournment of the House. He was much interested in the district. He was one of the first who went into the district, and had taken part in the formation of many of these companies, and he said that the statement of the Inspector regarding the paid-up shares being given to shareholders in that district was absolutely incorrect.

Mr. SEDDON.—It is taken from the gazetted sworn statements of the managers.

Mr. McLEAN wished to explain how they were given. If a company was formed with, say, ten thousand shares, very frequently it was considered that half the capital was paid up, but every one got an equal amount. He had more shares, he believed, in that district than would paper that chamber, and he had never received a paid-up share yet; he was paying, he dared to say, at present £15 a month for calls in that district. A number of persons had written to him in regard to this matter. It cast a great slur on the district. Many men had spent twenty years of their life working down there, and were as poor as, or poorer than, when they went there. He did not think that any mines in the colony had been worked on a fairer basis than at Reefton, nor did he know a single company which had given away paid-up shares during his time. He did not wish to take up more time, and he would not have moved the adjournment had he not received letters on the subject.

Mr. SEDDON regretted the honourable gentleman should have made a charge against a most deserving public officer. There was no more independent or useful servant in the employment of the Government than Mr. Henry Gordon, Chief Inspector of Mines, and he simply gave what was given by the managers

Mr. Taylor

and sworn to as correct before Justices of the Peace. Therefore either the mine-managers were unable to make up a statement in accordance with the law, or else they had one and all unwittingly committed a breach of the law by making a statement in the form supplied to the department. The honourable gentleman was on the horns of a dilemma. Mr. Gordon said, "The official returns." If a mistake had been made, the blame should fall on the right shoulders, and not on those of Mr. Gordon, because he knew that in the Mining Report that gentleman had endeavoured to do justice to the goldfields of the colony, and nothing was further from his mind than to injure the good people of Reefton.

Mr. O'CONNOR would like to remark that he had taken some interest in this question. When he had seen it on the Order Paper he had gone into the subject, and had found that the statement as explained by the Premier was absolutely correct. He had taken the trouble of totalling up the amounts, and found that it was absolutely correct. The only thing that he found wrong in the report was that the language used was somewhat vague, and that had given ground for the misunderstanding. The words "outside shareholder" should not have been used in that sense without some little explanation, but what Mr. Gordon had meant to convey in his report was perfectly fair if examined in connection with the context. There were shareholders outside the promoters, and there were promoters who did not subscribe, or who held paid-up or partly-paid-up shares. It was perfectly evident that it was the value of the shares as they were paid for by outside speculators that was taken into consideration by people when they considered what money they had lost by speculation—they never troubled themselves about the cost value of the shares; and the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. McLean) knew perfectly well that when promoters formed a company they generally managed to pay themselves for its formation by getting a large amount of paid-up shares for their own interest. This increased the speculative price paid by shareholders for the actual outlay in works only; and Mr. Gordon was perfectly right in saying that the mines showed a profit of nearly cent. per cent. He considered that some correction in the wording of the paragraph would make it more clear, but everything said in it was perfectly true, and could be substantiated by records with which Mr. Gordon had nothing to do beyond transcribing them.

Mr. ALLEN would like to ask the Minister of Mines whether the first paragraph of the Mines Statement, page 18, with regard to kauri-gum, was correct. The paragraph was, "This industry is assuming larger proportions every year; and last year the export was 8,705 tons, valued at £517,678, which is equal to £52 9s. 4d. per ton." Was that correct? Then it went on to say, "whereas the quantity exported for the previous year was 8,388 tons, valued at £487,056, being equal to £52 4s. per ton." Was that correct?

An Hon. MEMBER.—He is not here to answer. Put your question on the Paper.

Mr. ALLEN said the honourable gentleman could find out, and answer in a day or two. Further on it said, "It will therefore be seen that the quantity last year has increased by 317 tons, while the value increased by £80,622." Was that correct?

Mr. McLEAN wished to say one word in reply. He desired to cast no reflections on Mining Inspector Gordon. He had long known Mr. Gordon, and had made no reflection whatever upon him. He wished to repeat his statement that the figures—£149,681 paid-up scrip—were misleading. Wholly-paid-up and partially-paid-up shares were different things, and all parties who came into a claim were equally benefited. It would be found on examination that his statement was correct.

TAKAKA-COLLINGWOOD ROAD.

Mr. O'CONNOR asked the Premier, Whether the Government will provide this year for laying off and constructing the inland road between Takaka and Collingwood, at the Parapara River, to give access to Crown lands and save the danger and delays now caused to travellers by the mud-flat and Parapara crossing? He might explain that this had been promised time after time to the locality by different Governments, and that if done it would open up Crown lands, and avoid danger and delays.

Mr. J. McKENZIE replied that this matter was under consideration.

PHOTOGRAPHING PRISONERS.

Mr. PALMER asked the Defence Minister, —(1.) Is he aware that the prison authorities insist on photographing persons committed to take their trial, whether they be guilty or innocent, and placing such photographs among the collection of criminal classes? (2.) Also, if such persons do not consent to this course, is he aware they are assaulted, to endeavour to get them to do so? (3.) Failing to get the photograph either by persuasion or assault, is the Minister aware that a person who may be innocent of any crime, except refusing to have his photograph placed among those of criminals, is thereupon sentenced to solitary confinement on bread and water? (4.) Does the Minister consider regulations allowing this to be either in conformity with law, justice, or the Prisons Act? He asked these questions because such a case had occurred in Auckland. A man was presumed to be innocent until he was found guilty, and it seemed to him that any man committed for trial would be justified in resisting having his photograph taken, to be classed among criminals. The case as submitted to him was as follows:—

"I desire to draw your attention to a matter which calls for the immediate consideration of the Government and the Parliament of this colony, feeling assured that you will take such measures as will set at rest all doubts on the subject, and, if necessary, demand a remedy for what I consider a grievous wrong.

"1. 'The Prisons Act, 1882,' repealed all

other Prisons Acts and the regulations made thereunder. (See saving clause at end of Act.)

"2. The interpretation clause defines (if not inconsistent with the context), *inter alia*, that a criminal prisoner shall mean a prisoner convicted of or charged with a criminal offence.

"3. Section 14 draws a distinction between prisoners awaiting trial, and in law presumably innocent, and persons already convicted; and subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) provide the subjects upon which special regulations may be made under section 14.

"4. Subsection (4) directs that such regulations shall not be oppressive to those awaiting trial, &c.

"5. Regulations were made under the statute and gazetted in 1883. You will find them at page 1682.

"6. Clause 6 of regulations provides that a uniform system of discipline shall prevail.

"7. Clause 17 of regulations confers power on the Gaoler to have prisoners photographed, but does not authorise force to be used for that purpose.

"8. Clause 31 contains provisions of a special nature, and was evidently framed under section 14 of the statute and the four subsections above mentioned, giving certain privileges to persons awaiting trial (who are presumably innocent).

"9. Clause 17 is of a general nature, and evidently was not made under the powers given in section 14, under which clause 31 was evidently framed, and that clause contains not one word about photography.

"10. On the 19th July a man named William Younger was committed for trial in Auckland on a charge of robbery. Bail was allowed, but, being a stranger here, bondsmen could not be obtained, and he was lodged in Mount Eden Gaol to await trial on the 28th instant (Monday next).

"11. The Gaoler soon after, in accordance with clause 17 of the regulations (as he fully believed), informed the prisoner that he desired to take his (prisoner's) photo. Prisoner refused to have it taken, on the ground that he was not a convicted prisoner. He was charged before a Visiting Justice with disobedience of lawful orders, and sentenced to solitary confinement (twenty-four hours) on bread and water.

"12. When that term of durance vile expired, he was again ordered to submit to have his photo. taken. He again refused, whereupon force was employed, which, after a struggle, he successfully resisted. He was again charged with disobedience of lawful orders, and sentenced to three days' 'solitary' on bread and water.

"13. When that term expired he was again ordered to submit to be photographed; he again refused, and on the 22nd instant he was brought before the Resident Magistrate, charged with the offence, which, being the third, was aggravated, and he was sentenced to five days' 'solitary' on bread and water, the grounds of the conviction stated by the Resident Magistrate (Mr. R. S. Bush) being that clause 6 of the regulations provided that 'one uniform system

of discipline shall prevail,' and that it applied to all prisoners of whatsoever kind, whether convicted or merely in custody awaiting trial.

"14. I argued that, if that were law, section 14 of the Act and clause 31 of the regulations were an absurdity, inasmuch as the convicted prisoners would then be entitled to the luxuries and privileges enjoyed by those awaiting trial, and the latter would be subjected to the severities to be endured by the former.

"15. I have been acting throughout as legal adviser of the prisoner, preparing his defence.

"16. On the day after the last sentence was inflicted I went to the gaol, and asked to see the prisoner. I was permitted; but under the regulations a solicitor is not entitled to see a prisoner under sentence except in the presence of a gaol official, and then only under a Justice's order, which I did not possess, showing that the Gaoler had power to refuse private consultation, in direct violation of the regulations, clause 31, apparently made under section 14.

"17. On reference to the subsections (1), (2), (3), and (4) of section 14, regulations as to privacy for consultation with his solicitor are contemplated, but I cannot say from memory if that is provided for in clause 31 of the regulations. I think so.

"18. I consider that the man has been grossly oppressed. I should consider it gross oppression if any man compelled me to be photographed at his sweet will; if he used force it would be an assault, and actionable. Thrice has he been sentenced to 'solitary' and bread and water, his last sentence ending on the morning of the 28th—the opening of the session.

"19. The law says that the presumption of innocence must prevail unless rebutted. This man, therefore, until conviction, must be regarded as innocent; therefore why treat him as if he were already convicted?—Yours sincerely,

"J. O'MEAGHER.

"NOTE.—Clause 17 provides that a prisoner may be photographed on his reception in the prison. Now, let us suppose that at the time of his reception a Justice of the Peace, and the necessary bondsmen, were at the prison with the bonds ready for signature by the necessary parties—bail having been allowed by the committing Resident Magistrate: would the gaoler have the power, under clause 17, to postpone the execution of the bond one single instant in order that he might photo the prisoner? Would it not be his duty, the moment the bond was completed, to set the prisoner at large, and restore to him any property previously taken from him, and to do so instantaneously?"

This contention seemed to be right. Clause 6 was absolutely contrary to the Prisons Act, which said that there was to be a difference made, and that prisoners awaiting trial were only to be kept in safe custody. He would call attention to this fact: that if this man had got bail when he was committed for trial—

Mr. SPEAKER said he could not allow argument in asking a question.

Mr. Palmer

Mr. PALMER said, well, he would ask, if the man had been rich and could have got bail, would this indignity have been put upon him? and why, because he was a poor man, should he be liable to be classed among criminals? The decision of the Magistrate, that no difference was to be made between committed prisoners and prisoners awaiting trial, was not in conformity with justice, nor in accordance with the Prisons Act.

Mr. REEVES said the speech delivered by the questioner was, he thought, of a highly debatable character. That, of course, was his opinion merely. The indignity complained of with regard to prisoners appeared to be, not that they were photographed, but that their photographs were put amongst those of a collection of criminals. If that were so, no doubt it would be an indignity; but he was informed that that was not the case, nor was it an invariable rule by any means that people detained for trial were photographed—some were and some were not. The honourable gentleman had said that in this particular case the man was assaulted when he would not allow his photograph to be taken, and was severely punished after three refusals. This was the first he had heard of the case, and, of course, he should make inquiry. He was informed that if a man refused to have his photograph taken he was not assaulted, but was simply dealt with under the Prison Regulations. As regarded the allegations concerning the treatment of this particular prisoner, he would make inquiry.

Mr. TAYLOR asked the Minister, when he took this matter into consideration, to see whether he should not include among those to be so photographed persons who could find substantial bail—such persons as they had down their way. He would ask that there should be fair-play all round, and that the rule should apply to such people as he had referred to as well as to poor people who could not find bail.

Mr. PALMER said his question had not been fully answered, and he was entitled to press it further. He asked the Minister if he considered that photographing in gaol persons who had simply been committed for trial was in conformity with the Prisons Act, or in accordance with law and justice.

Mr. REEVES replied that nothing was better established than this: that a Minister was not expected to give his own opinion in answering a question.

MANAWATU RIVER BRIDGE.

Mr. WILSON asked the Minister for Public Works, If he will grant a subsidy of £1 for £1 to assist the local bodies which have jurisdiction over the adjoining districts to build a bridge over the Manawatu River? He had heard the answer given regarding the erection of bridges over the Waipahi River and the Pomahaka River at Kelso, but he did not think this question could be replied to in the same manner. The work was a very important one indeed, and the local bodies were not able

to undertake its construction without assistance.

Mr. SEDDON said this question was like many others which honourable members would like to have answered—it could only be answered when honourable members had the Public Works Statement and the public-works estimates before them.

Mr. FISH.—When will that be?

Mr. SEDDON said he hoped it would be before long—perhaps, at the latest, next week.

CHEVIOT ROAD.

Mr. JOYCE asked the Minister of Lands, Has Sir James Hector, within the last week, been to Cheviot, examining a seam of coal recently found on that estate? If so, when will his report be laid before this House? He noticed in one of the newspapers a statement that Sir James Hector had been at Cheviot, and he would like to have some explanation in regard to this matter.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said Sir James Hector had been sent down to the Cheviot district owing to a telegram being received from one of the surveyors there stating that they had discovered some coal. His report had not yet been received, but he hoped to get it next day or the day following, and the report would be laid on the table as soon as he received it. He might state that the supposed seam of coal recently discovered was merely, as far as he could understand, a few trees which had accidentally got into an old drift, and in cutting through the drift the coal had been discovered. The workmen, however, thought it might lead to a large discovery, but he was afraid that was not the case. No doubt, however, Sir James Hector's report would throw more light on the subject.

RABBIT NUISANCE.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE asked the Minister of Lands, Whether, in view of the heavy expenses to which settlers prosecuted by Rabbit Inspectors are put to for Court charges, even in cases where such prosecutions are virtually unsuccessful, he will cause all summonses in future to be served by Inspectors or Rabbit Agents as part of their regular duty? He might explain that settlers were invariably charged mileage, sometimes amounting to £1 10s., £2, or £2 10s., and that in cases where the fine was only £1: that was, individuals were punished in accordance with their distance from the Courthouse. Then, where a batch of settlers were living together they had to pay separate mileage-charges for one visit of a policeman. He could not see why the Inspectors, whose duty it was to travel through the districts, should not serve these summonses. So many complaints had been received from all directions that one could only conclude that the rabbit law and the department were becoming a pest to the settlers only second to the rabbits themselves.

Mr. J. McKENZIE said, no doubt the honourable gentleman was perfectly right in saying that the law was becoming a pest to

the settlers—to those negligent settlers who did not keep the rabbits down on their places. He might tell honourable gentlemen that he had given this matter a considerable amount of attention during the recess. Complaints had been made to him with regard to the expenses cast upon settlers who were summoned to Court. In the first place, he did away with counsel on behalf of the Government, so that the defendants would not have to pay that expense; and what did he find? No sooner did the Government do away with employing counsel to defend the department than the settlers commenced to employ counsel against them. He could give instances of that.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—It is very natural and proper.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, in the first place, when they found the Government employed counsel, they did not: they came to Court and said there was no use in fighting the department. In order to give them fair-play he did away with the employment of counsel so far as the Government was concerned, but as soon as he did that they employed counsel against the Government.

An Hon. MEMBER.—Quite right.

Mr. J. MCKENZIE said, very well; that showed that they were prepared to spend money in that way instead of doing their duty in keeping the rabbits down. With regard to getting the Inspectors to serve the summonses, it was a question of increasing the number of Inspectors. In some districts the Inspector would have to go four or five times before he could serve the summonses, for the Inspector was well known, and some of the settlers dodged him, and kept out of his way, and did all sorts of things. If the honourable gentleman's suggestion were adopted it would mean an increase in the staff of Inspectors. He did not think there was any great hardship, because the department never took a person into Court unless he was negligent and would not do his duty. Honourable gentlemen knew that it was a very disagreeable business putting the Act into force. He could assure honourable members that the Inspectors had plenty to do without putting these burdens on them. He did not, moreover, think it was a very desirable thing that they should be called upon to do the duty alluded to. After having given the subject his consideration, he could not see his way to adopt the suggestion.

GOVERNMENT INSURANCE RATES OF INTEREST.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON asked the Colonial Treasurer, if he will consider the propriety of revising the rates of interest charged by the Government Insurance Department on advances on policies, where it can be arranged that the advances are for fixed periods? He had already that session had occasion to bring before the Minister the propriety of making some other arrangement than the present one, which bore very hardly upon borrowers. He was aware that other insurance offices

charged similar rates to those of the Government department, but he might point out to the Minister the advantage of initiating a reform which would be so beneficial to a great number of persons, and would also give *kudos* to the department.

Mr. WARD would point out to his honourable friend that the first difficulty which presented itself in the proposal which he wished to bring about was that it would be impossible to advance loans for fixed periods against policies, as the latter were determined upon the death of the policyholders, and, that being the case, a fixed period of mortgage was out of the question. He wished to say again, so far as the Government Insurance Department was concerned, it had to conduct its operations in precisely the same way as other life insurance offices did. If any pressure were brought to bear to induce the management to reduce the rates of interest, or to give concessions to the policyholders, or to investors, or to other people who wished to obtain money, it would place the office at a very great disadvantage in comparison with other insurance offices which it was competing against; and the result would be that the office would not be able to pay bonuses equal to those given by other offices, and that would be the means of causing a large quantity of fresh business to pass to other companies. That being so, it was not desirable to interfere with the Government office with a view of giving any preference to persons wishing to obtain money from the department, or that policyholders should get advances at a lower rate of interest than could be got from other offices. Other offices trading in New Zealand did not charge a lower rate than the Government department for advances upon policies; and some of them, as had been pointed out on a former occasion, charged 1 per cent. more. He thought it right that the department should be conducted on broad and safe lines, and lines in the interest of policyholders, and the object which the honourable gentleman desired to attain would, in his opinion, be against their interests.

FEDERATED MAORI ASSEMBLY.

Mr. KAPA asked the Government,—(1.) What steps they intend to take with reference to the petition of Major Kemp and the Federated Maori Assembly of New Zealand, praying the Governor and the Government to grant them the powers conferred upon them by the Treaty of Waitangi and "The New Zealand Constitution Act, 1852"? (2.) Whether the Government will take any steps in the matter during this present session to give effect to the prayer of the petitioners? He wished to make some lengthy remarks in asking this question, but he was precluded from doing so by the adjournment of the House having been moved. He would therefore content himself with waiting for an answer, and would take what steps he might deem necessary afterwards.

Mr. CARROLL said the Government did not take any steps whatever in reference to the petition of Major Kemp and the Federated

Mr. J. McKensie

Maori Assembly of New Zealand. The Government had no reason to believe that the rights intended to be conferred on the Native race by the Treaty of Waitangi, and also the rights given them by the Constitution Act, were not enjoyed by them at the present time. The Government had no intention to give effect to the prayer of the petitioners; but, as far as any practical views had been given expression to in the petition, the Government would only be too glad to avail themselves of the opportunity of taking them into consideration.

SALVATION ARMY.

Mr. HOGG said he had received a copy of a resolution passed at a public meeting at Masterton protesting against the penalty inflicted on a member of the Salvation Army at Milton for playing the cornet. The Minister the other afternoon had stated that he had given instructions that a report should be obtained at once on the case, and he would like to know whether anything had been decided upon by the Government.

Mr. REEVES said he was not able to give the honourable gentleman any further information on the matter except that when he last heard the man had not gone to gaol.

ADJOURNMENT.

Mr. FISH moved the adjournment of the House. He did so because he was entirely dissatisfied with the reply of the Minister of Justice to the question put to him by the honourable member for Waitemata. The honourable gentleman answered the question most unsatisfactorily, to his (Mr. Fish's) mind, and not only did he do that, but he refrained from stating whether he intended to make inquiries into the matter.

Mr. REEVES said he stated most distinctly that he did so intend.

Mr. FISH said he failed to gather that from the honourable gentleman's remarks.

Mr. REEVES stated he had said so twice.

Mr. FISH said the honourable gentleman did not give any indication of what his opinion was about the matter. If it was the practice under any regulations to take the photograph of a man committed for trial and before being found guilty, it was one of the most scandalous things ever heard of in a British community. He did not care whether the thing was done in accordance with law; whether the Magistrate had gone beyond or kept within the bounds of that regulation; whether it was under the Prisons Act or not. The House ought to get from the Minister no uncertain sound as to whether he approved of such things or not. If they allowed such things to go on, they might as well be living in Russia, or in any other country tyrannically governed. He did not wish to be offensive—he was disposed to be quite the contrary—but it did appear to him that the Minister was disposed to allow his understrappers, or inferiors, or the heads of the departments, to rule in the most autocratic and tyrannical manner. He posed there every day as the apostle of Liberty—as the champion of

reforms; and yet, to judge by his conduct and his remarks, he seemed inclined to rule most despotically, and, he (Mr. Fish) must say, unjustly. He thought it was also time—this marked the difference in his apparent rule—something was told the House in reference to a statement made the other day with regard to a "captain" or "lieutenant" of the Salvation Army at Milton. He did not hear what the honourable gentleman said, but in the papers he was reported to have said that he was going to stop the course of justice, and not allow the man to be imprisoned until further communication was made. That was not right, in the first place, and if the statements made by the papers in Otago in regard to this Salvation Army captain were correct the man deserved all he got. In this case he openly defied the law. These people made it a practice of going and playing the most horrible tunes on the most peculiar instruments before every publichouse in the district, and in some cases they wrote on the pavement, "This is the road to hell." This particular offence was committed next door to the Athenaeum, and so hideous was the noise that the people in the Athenaeum could not read quietly the books they were perusing; and he was informed, further, that these people in Milton had been warned repeatedly, and had, in the face of the law, determined to do this. He was justified in saying that, because they were supposed to have considerable political influence, they found the honourable gentleman pandering to them; and that day, in the case of a man only committed for trial, they found the Minister endeavouring to smooth over or take no notice of the fact brought under his attention by the honourable member for Waitemata, which, if true, was really disgraceful. He would say, too, that it appeared to him the whole discipline of the Police Force of the colony was out of joint. There was a question he had put on the Order Paper himself, referring to a policeman at Port Chalmers bringing up a little boy five years of age, and charging him with throwing stones at the old Town Hall. Such a thing was a travesty of justice. If the policeman had taken the little urchin home, and requested his parents to give him a flogging, there would have been no necessity to bring the boy before the Court. Things like these ought to command, and demanded, the Minister's attention.

Mr. REEVES said he was not in charge of the Police Force.

Mr. FISH said it was all the worse for that. The honourable gentleman appeared not to be the only member of the Government who allowed these things to come under notice, and to go on unchecked. The members of the Government were giving the official heads of their departments too much authority, and used no proper checks over their doings. This kind of thing, if it kept on, would arouse in the minds of law-abiding citizens a feeling of intense indignation, and justly so too. What he complained of chiefly in this case was the manner in which the honourable gentleman seemed to answer questions—as if he sided with

the affair, and did not care how much these things went on. The Minister must not do that as long as he was a member of the House, because the Minister would not only have to tell the House whether he would make an inquiry, but he would also have to give the House some idea as to whether he thought those things correct or not. Unless he did this he would be annoyed by questions of this kind.

Mr. BUCHANAN did not wish to take up the time of the House, but it certainly did strike him that the honourable gentleman in charge of this department seemed to take it as a perfectly fit and proper thing that the police should, at their own discretion, no matter how trivial the charge under which prisoners before conviction might lie, have portraits taken of them, which for all time would adorn the Police Department album.

Mr. REEVES stated that he had said exactly the reverse.

Mr. BUCHANAN was sorry if he had misunderstood the honourable gentleman. He got up in no hostile spirit.

Mr. REEVES.—Then, why do you misrepresent me?

Mr. BUCHANAN said he did not consciously misrepresent the honourable gentleman. He understood him to say that in some cases the photographs of these prisoners were taken, in other cases not. Did he misrepresent the honourable gentleman by saying this?

Mr. REEVES said he had stated that in no case were they put amongst the criminal photographs.

Mr. BUCHANAN did not accuse the honourable gentleman of doing that, but he understood him as saying that in some cases the photographs of prisoners were taken before trial, and in others not. He (Mr. Buchanan) said without any hesitation that it was outrageous to take the portrait of any person whatever until after actual trial and conviction, and he hoped the Minister would at once put a stop to such a shameful practice.

Mr. ALLEN quite agreed with the two last speakers with regard to this question of photographing persons innocent of crime. It was neither just nor right in any British community that such a thing should take place. What he wanted to say a few words about was the case of "Captain" Kerr, of the Salvation Army, who was arrested.

Mr. REEVES said there was a notice of motion—No. 5—on the Order Paper about this, and therefore the honourable gentleman was not in order in now referring to it.

Mr. SPEAKER said his attention was drawn to the fact that this matter was on the Order Paper by notice of motion. Therefore the honourable gentleman would not be able to enter into that case. He had not noticed that it was on the Order Paper.

Mr. ALLEN said he was not referring to the Order Paper at all. Various reports were going through the newspapers regarding this particular case. They were having put through the newspapers only one side of the question.

Mr. Fish

They ought to have both sides, so that the public generally might judge as to the justice or otherwise of the Magistrate's decision. He had carefully read through that decision, and it appeared to him, as far as he could judge, that the Magistrate had decided in a fair and just way. But they had not sufficient facts before them to come to a proper conclusion. In order to come to a proper conclusion, he thought all information ought to be given to the House on this subject, and he regretted they could not get that information.

Mr. REEVES said the honourable member was now referring to the notice of motion.

Mr. HOGG was very glad this question had cropped up that afternoon, because he had for a long time held the opinion that an extremely gross outrage was committed on unconvicted prisoners who were photographed in this manner. He knew, for a fact, that photographs were taken of persons who, when they were sent to trial, were not convicted, and who were presumably innocent. These photographs remained an indelible testimonial against their characters; and, if the Prisons Department was responsible for this, he certainly must say it was very much to be regretted that people who, under the cloak of authority, committed such gross outrages against the public should not be made amenable for their conduct. It was not simply the inclusion of these photographs amongst a number of others that constituted the outrage, but it was the mode in which the photograph was taken. The prisoners who were photographed were photographed in a particular manner. They were compelled to show the backs of their hands across their breast, and the moment such a photograph as that was exhibited it indicated to any one who knew anything at all about the matter that this person was presumably a criminal who had committed some dastardly offence—that he was a felon, and unfit to mingle with the rest of the people. A more degrading punishment than this photographing could not possibly be inflicted on any fellow-colonist. There were young men in this colony now who had been photographed, and against whom there was not even the presumption of crime; their photographs were to be seen, he believed, in almost every police-station in the colony. Not only that, but photographs had been taken of people arrested for the most trumpery offences imaginable. It seemed to him almost incredible that attention had not been directed to this matter before. It should not be tolerated any longer. He was not in a position now to mention some of them, but he knew that very trumpery offences had brought people into this position—that they had been photographed. Now, a viler use of a modern invention—namely, the camera—had never been made than this system of attaching a stigma for life upon persons who might be innocent. It was an indelible evidence against a man's character, and it was revolting to think that it should be allowed, and especially allowed by people who were supposed to be responsible for their actions. He hoped

the honourable gentleman at the head of the department would look into the matter. If the circumstances were such as had been stated, the matter was a most serious one, and demanded immediate attention.

Mr. BUCKLAND would like to say a word or two on the other side. There were cases in which it was necessary that persons arrested should be photographed. Say a person was arrested who was a complete stranger: it might be necessary to discover whether he was a notorious criminal, and therefore it was necessary that some record should be obtained. The manner, in which this photographing had been carried out was objected to, and he would remind honourable members that there was nothing easier in modern science than to take a person's photograph unawares. He would venture to say that if any one had a detective camera he could by means of it take every member of the House in three days, and not one of them know that he was taken. Where was the disgrace? It would be a horrible thing if the honourable member for Masterton should chance to be photographed when he went to the gaol to see the prisoners. He ventured to say, however, that the honourable gentleman had had his photograph taken before that day, and very likely, although it might be agony for him to know it, his photograph was placed alongside that of some young Jack Sheppard in the gaol. While on this question, he must admit that they had—and it was rather hard, too—to keep down crime in the best way they could, and although it was a very serious matter, yet he knew that in a great many cases it was absolutely necessary in the other colonies, and even in some parts of this colony, to know whether a particular person was in a district. Supposing, for instance, that Butler, who was said to have been liberated the other day, was supposed to have appeared up North, and it was necessary to find out whether it was really he. By taking a snap-shot at him with a detective camera, and sending it to Dunedin, the authorities in the North could let them know. There was no indignity in having photographs taken if they were merely kept out of sight in the office of the Inspector of Police, and if they were kept away from any one else; and it was only by means of copies being made that they could be transferred to other places. If a man was an honest man, and had committed no crime, he ought not to be ashamed of having his photograph taken and exhibited anywhere. He (Mr. Buckland) would not be ashamed of having his photograph taken. At the same time, he objected to the way in which it was done in the cases mentioned, and he doubted the necessity of this being done, as now, by force; he had no doubt there was a very good reason for having these photographs taken. Still, they were clumsy in the way they did it, and the Government should see they had better appliances.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON understood the grievance was not that snap-shots had been taken unawares of these or any other individuals—there was no harm in that. The grievance was

that persons who were merely being detained in safe custody were subjected to the same treatment as criminals, in being forcibly photographed. Now, as he understood the case, it was sought to be justified by Regulation No. 17, made under section 9 of "The Prisons Act, 1892"; but if the Minister only looked at these regulations he would see that they did not apply to persons merely detained for safe custody. The preamble to these regulations recited the various subsections of section 9 of the Act, and dealt entirely with persons who were under sentence. As to the part of the Act dealing with persons who were merely committed to prison while awaiting their trial, the first mention was in section 14, which provided that special regulations should be made for these. But no special regulations whatever had been made for those who were merely detained pending trial. Consequently, if the police officials had forcibly photographed any one detained pending trial, that person had had an illegal assault committed upon him by officers of the peace. He had his legal remedy, and would probably recover sounding damages.

Mr. KAPA was not satisfied with the reply that he had received to his question a little while ago. The Natives who brought this matter before the House attached a great deal of importance to it, and it was their sincere wish that they should get a definite reply from the Government, either in favour of it or a decided negative. They had got neither. Now, in connection with this matter the Natives prepared three large petitions. They went to a great deal of labour, and they expended a great deal of consideration over these matters. They sent one petition to His Excellency, another to that House, and another to the Legislative Council; and they had received not one reply to the three petitions. Last year Sir George Grey introduced a Bill to the House called the Native Empowering Bill. Shortly before the close of the session a deputation of Native chiefs waited on the Premier with regard to the matter, and it was suggested that it should stand over till this session; but up to the present time the Government had taken no steps whatever in the matter. Now, the Natives, in preferring these petitions that he referred to, considered that they were following out the lines laid down in that Bill as nearly as possible, with only one or two slight variations. Another reason why that Bill was not dealt with last session was on account of the suggestion or promise made by the Premier that the Bill should be translated into the Maori language and circulated throughout the Island. He had waited in vain for the Government to carry out that promise, but it was never fulfilled; and the Natives themselves did it—or, rather, Major Kemp had to print it and circulate it at his own expense. This was the third time the Natives had made an attempt to get some local government. The first attempt was made by the late Sydney Taiwhanga. He introduced a Bill, but he died before anything could be done with it; and when he (Mr. Kapa) succeeded him he also

introduced the same measure. That came to an untimely end, and this was now the third attempt made by the Natives in that direction, and it seemed probable that it would meet with the same fate. What the Natives wanted was a plain, straightforward answer. They wanted a plain reply in writing from the Government—simply a reply to say that the Government would accept the prayer of their petition or that they were not prepared to accept it. That was all they asked for. They did not want to be put off with an indefinite and vain answer. The honourable gentleman in charge of Native affairs, in reply to his question a little while ago, said if the Natives made any practical suggestion the Government would be very glad to consider it. He did not consider that meant anything at all. It was not a reply; there was nothing in it. The Natives were perfectly justified in making this request, because the request was founded upon the treaty made by the Queen, or upon a law granted by her Majesty. The Natives were waiting wearily and anxiously to get a reply.

Mr. J. KELLY said that, along with other members of the House, he wished to enter his protest against the indignities heaped on prisoners pending trial in the Auckland Gaol. He thought, if such things were done in accordance with any laws or regulations, the sooner such laws or regulations were repealed the better it would be for all concerned. He thought such a thing was simply monstrous. Until a person was found guilty he had no right whatever to be subjected to being photographed like ordinary prisoners. He could not allow this opportunity to pass without entering his emphatic protest against such force being used without cause.

Mr. CARROLL had a few words to say in reply to the honourable member for the Northern Maori District. He understood the honourable gentleman complained that he had not received a plain answer to a question he had put on the Order Paper in reference to the petition of Major Kemp. He did not know what plainer answer the honourable gentleman could expect than that the Government did not intend to take any steps in reference to the matter. And, furthermore, if there were any practical suggestions made by the Natives the Government would take them into consideration; and the Government did not admit the contention of those Natives that there were any rights intended to be conferred upon the Native race by the Treaty of Waitangi of which they were not in the enjoyment at the present time. Now, the honourable gentleman had said that the Maoris required a very straightforward answer. But they themselves should be straightforward in this respect: They should make it clear to the House and the Government what they really wanted under the Treaty of Waitangi. What was it that the Treaty of Waitangi was to give to them which they had not now? The Treaty of Waitangi, so far as it went, guaranteed to them their lands. The Maoris at the present time owned their lands. They got their titles from

Mr. Kapa

the Crown. In return for that, the confederation of Maori chiefs and tribes by the said treaty ceded the governing-power over these Islands to the British Crown. That was set down very clearly. The only alteration that had been made in the Treaty of Waitangi was, presumably, made in their favour, and that was the waiving of the pre-emptive right of the Crown. They had been exercising their rights down to the present time, and it was for them to consider now what was the proper thing to do. The honourable gentleman made reference also to the Bill brought in by Sir George Grey; he claimed that that Bill had met the views of the Maoris, when, as a matter of fact, it was the most incomprehensible ever suggested. Then he referred to the Bill brought in by his predecessor, Sydney Taiwhanga. What did that propose to do? It proposed to take the whole of the Native lands and vest them in a body of fifty, who were to have power to borrow upon them and levy rates and taxes, and so forth. Was that the kind of Bill the Maoris wished for? If the honourable gentleman wanted a written answer to his question, he had no objection to giving it; he could have it next day. He did hope the honourable gentleman would tell Major Kemp and the Natives now in Wellington in connection with the petition that it was the earnest wish of the Government that they should by all possible means give the Government practical suggestions in the way of legislation, and the Government would be only too happy to hear their views in that direction.

Mr. REEVES said he had not much to say. He had nothing to say in regard to the point brought up by the honourable member for the Northern Maori District, and he had not much to say in regard to the remarks made by the honourable members for Bruce and Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) relating to the case of the cornet-player, "Captain" Kerr. At the same time, he did think he had been exposed to a certain amount of misrepresentation on the point. The honourable member for Dunedin City referred to certain words supposed to have been used by him in answering a question on the subject the other day. The honourable member was not in the chamber, as he well remembered, when he (Mr. Reeves) answered the question; and he could not know what he had said. He had put into his mouth words which he (Mr. Reeves) had never used. He had evidently got outside the House, apparently from certain newspapers, a totally incorrect impression of what he had said. Honourable gentlemen were well aware that they constantly used words in the House which were caricatured—unintentionally, no doubt—in the newspapers. One newspaper put expressions into their mouths that they did not use, and newspaper No. 2 copied these into its columns from newspaper No. 1, while newspaper No. 3 commented in a violent manner on the alleged expressions found in newspapers Nos. 1 and 2. Something of that sort had been done on this occasion. What he did say with regard to the case was this: An

honourable gentleman brought up a question, and referred to the fact that he had waited upon His Excellency the Governor with a petition on the subject. He referred to this unfortunate man, whom, he thought, the honourable gentleman alleged to be languishing in gaol, and expressed a hope that he (Mr. Reeves) would be able to tell the House that the unfortunate man was released, and that he had been released in consequence of the spirited action taken by the honourable gentleman. In his reply he had reminded the honourable gentleman that the unfortunate man had not been in gaol, was not in gaol, and might not be in gaol: that, he thought, was what he said. The reporter of the *Otago Daily Times*, no doubt quite unintentionally, slightly altered that into this: "that he was not in gaol, and probably would not go to gaol." That made all the difference; all he (Mr. Reeves) said was that he might not go to gaol. For example, the Magistrate fined him £3, with the alternative of a month's imprisonment, and also gave him a fortnight in which to pay. The fine might at any moment have been paid. He would here remark that the fortnight did not expire till last Saturday; therefore they could not have known till then whether the man or his friends would pay the fine. Further, notice of appeal was given from the decision, and a fortnight must elapse during which the man could give notice of appeal. So that it was not till fourteen days had elapsed that they could possibly know whether the man intended to appeal in the usual way. Then, when the fortnight had elapsed, the next process—which could not have been used till yesterday—would be the issue of a warrant of distress. Of course, he was going to say nothing on that point, nor in the meantime did he intend to give any expression of opinion on it.

An Hon. MEMBER.—The Premier said that the sentence would not be served.

Mr. REEVES said he knew nothing about that; he knew nothing about what the Premier was alleged to have said. Then, with regard to the remarks made by the honourable member for Bruce, he thought that honourable gentleman had complained that information could not be got from the Government on that point. In reply, he had simply to point out to the honourable gentleman that it would be exceedingly impolitic for the Government to commence laying copies of papers of a more or less confidential character on the table during the progress of a matter that was not yet completed.

Mr. FISH said the honourable gentleman might have given that as a reason why he could not give the information, and every one would have been satisfied.

Mr. REEVES said he had had no opportunity of saying so; this was the first chance he had of declaring why the documents were not produced. The honourable member for Dunedin City, who was by no means lacking in intelligence, would, he felt quite sure, if he were in the lobby, admit the truth of his argument.

Now he would pass to the question of photographing. It seemed to him the indignity complained of lay in this: that the man was treated without tact, without kindness, and with undue severity—that was the allegation. He did not hesitate to say at once that a most unpleasant impression was created in his mind, and he thought an inquiry should be made as to whether the facts were as stated by the honourable member for Waitemata. But he had told the honourable member, he thought twice, that he would inquire into the facts, as he knew nothing about them. He was not yet aware, except from what that honourable gentleman had alleged, that the man was assaulted. If he was assaulted, he must say it was a most improper thing; but he did not know that he was. Let him appeal to the House. Was it considered to be the right thing that the head of a department, responsible for the control of the department, because certain allegations were made with regard to his officers, should at once express sympathy with the person said to be injured, and condemnation of his officers, before he had heard what those officers had to say? This was virtually what had been asked. A complaint had been made because he (Mr. Reeves) would not give an expression of opinion on this matter. What he had stated was that he would have the matter inquired into; and he did say that, previous to doing so, and to his being satisfied that the allegations were true, or partially true, he could not be expected to give an expression of opinion. He did not mind saying that the facts as stated demanded an inquiry; and, in answering the question, he thought he had made it quite clear—he certainly had so intended—that an inquiry should be made. He thought he was generally understood to say so. But the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), though, as he had said before, a man of remarkable shrewdness and intelligence, had the power of understanding or not anything when it suited him to a degree quite unequalled by any other politician he had ever met. With regard to the honourable member for Masterton, he was a gentleman who entertained strong opinions on the subject of reform in prison discipline and criminal law. He remembered that honourable gentleman on a former occasion stated that he would like to blow up all the prisons with dynamite. That, of course, might or might not be a laudable aspiration, but it was hardly one with which the Minister of Justice could be expected to sympathize. It was not the Minister's duty to blow up all the prisons with dynamite—quite the contrary: his duty was to strengthen their walls, and take care that the bars and doors were in good order, so that the criminal classes should not escape. He and the honourable gentleman, therefore, were not on the same plane, and he (Mr. Reeves) therefore could not be expected to approach the question from the honourable gentleman's standpoint. The honourable gentleman dwelt on the fact that persons might be photographed, and, in fact, had been photographed, who were detained

in gaol on most trumpery charges. He had asked the honourable gentleman to specify a single instance, and the honourable gentleman had declined to do so. He had not asked the name or the locality; he had simply asked for one single instance of a case in which a man detained on a trumpery charge had been so treated. He had said that it was a vile thing that people's photographs should be exhibited who were so detained. He certainly agreed with the honourable gentleman, and said it would be vile to exhibit the photograph of a man who was temporarily confined in gaol on a trumpery charge; but he doubted whether persons confined for trumpery charges had ever been photographed, and he was quite sure the photographs had never been exhibited. With regard to the whole question of photographing people who were simply detained, anything of that kind ought to be done with the utmost tact, and only under the most unusual circumstances. He quite admitted—and he thought the honourable member for Waitemata and others really agreed with him on this point—that if the circumstances were not such as to make it really necessary in the interests of justice that photographs should be taken, then it should not be done. He would inquire, and if a wrong had been done he would take uncommonly good care that no such wrong should be done again.

The hour of half-past five having arrived, Mr. SPEAKER left the chair.

HOUSE RESUMED.

Mr. SPEAKER resumed the chair at half-past seven o'clock.

WEST COAST SETTLEMENT RESERVES BILL.

Mr. CARROLL moved the third reading of this Bill.

Mr. McGUIRE wished to enter as strong a protest as he was able against this Bill owing to certain clauses that had been inserted, and also in consequence of certain matters being omitted. The previous night he had moved certain amendments, in the interests of honesty and justice, which, he thought, should have been incorporated in the Bill. He firmly and honestly believed that the late Prime Minister, had he been alive, would have agreed to the insertion of the clause which he had referred to, or of something to that effect, which would have given relief to those interested. It would be remembered that the late Prime Minister had had this matter in contemplation for years. That honourable gentleman had tried to solve this great and difficult question that was regarding the progress of the West Coast, and, in answer to a question put by him (Mr. McGuire) in the House in 1891, he promised that he would meet the settlers on the Coast and consult with them, and also with the Native owners, in order to solve this difficulty. The promise then made was faithfully kept, and the late Premier met the settlers at Patea, accompanied by the Attorney-General and the Public Trustee, and the whole matter was gone into

Mr. Reeves

between the Europeans and the Natives; and the result of this interview was the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act of 1892—an Act which reflected the greatest credit on the late Prime Minister. It was a great pity, in the interests of just and honest legislation, that the late Prime Minister was not alive and present the previous evening in order to see justice done in this matter. The subject Mr. Ballance had to deal with was a complex and difficult one: it was a question which it was very difficult indeed for any one to solve. But here was one of the simplest matters possible. It was only connected with two or three people, while there were hundreds of people interested in the other question, and the honourable gentleman solved that, which the Legislature was unable to solve for eleven long years. He said that had the late Prime Minister been spared to his adopted country he would have seen his way to meet these parties on the lines of common honesty. Mr. Ballance had successfully dealt with a very large and difficult question—a question in which great difficulties existed, where there had been appeals made to the Privy Council, where cases were taken before the Supreme Court of this country. And yet here was one of the simplest matters possible! He was perfectly certain that the late Prime Minister would have seen no injustice done to one single individual in the country, because his heart was so good that he would not allow confiscation to be applied even to an individual, however poor and politically insignificant that individual might be. But on the previous night the House was deaf to every appeal made by him in Committee; there was not one voice raised in the interests of justice and honesty; and the result would be that the few people—because they were few—would suffer confiscation of the whole of their improvements in the shape of houses, machinery, fencing, planting, *et cetera*, put upon land leased from the Native owner in good faith. Notice was given to them that they must go and deliver up possession at once, without being allowed to remove a stick off the place. Where was the honesty and justice in this matter? Surely, it was very easy for the Government, if they thought proper, to meet this case in a fair and equitable manner, and not allow themselves to be dictated to in this matter, to the injury of innocent parties. It was not necessary, in the interests of the country, that a few people who had done no wrong should have all their belongings confiscated. Such a sacrifice he did not think was necessary. Far be it from him to blame the Public Trustee. If such power was put into that gentleman's hands he could not help himself. But why give him such power? He blamed the Government and honourable members for doing that. The amendment which he had brought forward would have done justice to all parties interested; and where no injustice existed, and where there was no unpleasant feeling whatever between the Native owners, where both parties were satisfied, all the Public Trustee would

have had to do, if his (Mr. McGuire's) amendment had been incorporated, was to see that no injustice was done to either party. He would be the last to wish to see any injustice done to the Natives, and he certainly did not wish to see any injustice done to the European settlers. He objected to the way in which this Bill had been rushed through, without a clause of the kind of that he was contending for being incorporated in it. It was not creditable to the Government or to honourable members. The clause was this:—

"Notwithstanding any of the provisions of the said Act as to the leasing of land by tender or otherwise, the Public Trustee may, in his absolute discretion, confirm any lease granted by Maoris to Europeans before the passing of the said Act, provided, on inquiry, that he is satisfied that both parties to the lease desire its continuance, and that no undue advantage has been taken of the Native owners by such lease."

Surely there was nothing unreasonable in this amendment. Had that amendment been incorporated in the Bill they would have been carrying out the wishes of the Native owners who were interested in this matter, and they would also have been doing a just thing to the Europeans who had taken these leases, and who on the strength of those leases had made certain improvements. But that did not seem to satisfy the Government or their supporters. What they wanted to do was to confiscate the whole of the improvements of these settlers, and to rob them, perhaps, of all they possessed in the world, and make them go forth and start in the world afresh. Surely there was no justice in such a line of action as that. He would read a telegram which he had just received from one of the settlers: "Hear McCullum and others, at Rahotu, received notice from Public Trustee not to remove their property off Native reserves. Will you kindly inquire if this be true? Bad enough to be hunted off themselves, without leaving their property." He was surprised that the House did not see fit to act in the way in which the late Prime Minister, had he been alive, would have acted should the occasion have arisen,—because any one who knew the history of the West Coast Settlement Reserves Act knew what a difficult question he had to deal with in that. And the reason why he succeeded was that his heart was in the work, and he was imbued with a desire to do justice to all parties, Natives and Europeans alike; and the result was that a measure was passed which was the best compromise that could be come to under the circumstances. The case of those unfortunate people was a matter he had continually brought before the House. He had requested members of the Government to take the matter up. He had submitted an amendment to the Hon. the Minister having charge of the Bill, in order to do justice to those unfortunate people; but, he was sorry to say, no justice whatever had been done. It seemed to him strange that the Government, who were always talking of placing

the Natives in the same position as the Europeans, did not take the opportunity of doing so in this case. With reference to another important matter, he would ask, why should not those Natives who ran into debt be compelled to pay? If there were large sums of money in the hands of the Public Trustee, no creditor could touch that money. He could not allow this Bill to pass without making a strong protest against such innovations. There were many things in the Bill which he believed in, and which he would be inclined to heartily support, and he believed it was a necessary measure; but so strongly did he feel in respect to his amendment which had been left out of the Bill, and to some of the clauses which had been inserted, that he would move, That the Bill be read a third time that day six months.

Mr. WARD would suggest to his honourable friend that he should withdraw the amendment he had proposed. The matter had been very forcibly placed before the House. It was of very great importance to those concerned. The honourable gentleman had on several occasions brought the same matter before the notice of the Government, and during the last few days urgent messages which he had received on the particular point referred to he had submitted to him (Mr. Ward). He had informed the honourable gentleman that the question would be gone into in Cabinet and duly reported on. Indeed, he was bound to say that in some of the cases which the honourable gentleman had brought under the notice of the Government it did appear to him to be somewhat unjust that those landowners should not be allowed to remove their improvements; and, in his opinion, that they should not be allowed to continue the leases which they occupied before the passing of this Act. As to the other matter which the honourable gentleman had urged on behalf of those people, that they should be allowed to remove their improvements, it was a concession—he was speaking for himself—that had a great deal to recommend it. If the honourable gentleman would agree to withdraw his amendment that the Bill be read that day six months, he could assure him that this important matter would be brought before the Ministry and a decision arrived at which, he hoped, would be satisfactory to the honourable gentleman. He thought, with that assurance, the honourable gentleman might withdraw his amendment and allow the Bill to proceed, and he hoped other honourable members who were anxious to see justice done would fall in with his suggestion.

Mr. McGUIRE said what he wanted was to get as much justice as was possible for the settlers, who had already rendered good service to the country, and who were living in peace and harmony with the Natives. They should be allowed to continue so. However, after the statement of the Colonial Treasurer, he would withdraw his amendment, leaving the matter in the hands of the Government, in the hope that justice would be done to all parties interested.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Mr. ROLLESTON said, before the honourable gentleman replied he wished to know where they were. The Colonial Treasurer had asked the honourable member opposite to withdraw his amendment, and had made a promise that the matter would be considered by the Government. He hoped the honourable member for Egmont would not withdraw his amendment, for it ought to have been put. He thought the position the Government had taken up through the Colonial Treasurer was an unfortunate one. They had no right to assure the House and that honourable member that they were going to reconsider the question, because they could not do it, and they knew that perfectly well—it was simply misleading the honourable gentleman.

Mr. WARD said it was in connection with the question of improvements only.

Mr. ROLLESTON said it was on the question of reopening leases that had not been admitted in the Act of last session. The promise reopened the whole question, and he thought the honourable gentleman opposite had been grossly misled. The Government had no right, he thought, to play with the House over this important question.

Mr. SEDDON said the Colonial Treasurer had consulted him before he made the statement referred to, and it only had reference to very hard cases in connection with leases entered into between certain persons and the Natives. Both parties were willing that the leases should be recognised: that had been determined. Now, it was very hard that, in cases of that kind, there was no power given—notwithstanding that the Public Trustee might wish it—to allow these persons to remove any improvements; and the Colonial Treasurer also said that this phase of the question, which was forcibly put by the honourable member for Egmont, would be considered. This was not going contrary to the existing law, or to what was evidently the wish of the Legislature in respect of this Bill. It was only the question of whether discretionary power should be given to the Public Trustee in cases of this kind. He knew, himself, there were cases of hardship, where the Natives themselves, he believed, were perfectly willing that the Public Trustee should act, but he had not power to do so.

Mr. G. HUTCHISON wished to say a word or two upon the question of the third reading of the Bill. He agreed with much that the honourable member for Egmont had said, but he would not have felt justified in supporting the amendment, that the Bill be read a third time that day six months. He recognised in the amending Bill a considerable number of necessary improvements on the Act of last session. As to the promise made by the Colonial Treasurer, that the Cabinet would consider the proposal brought forward by the honourable member for Egmont, with a view to introducing in another place an amendment to give a discretion to the Public Trustee,—that, to his mind, only illustrated the wonderful length the Legislature had already gone to by investing in an

individual an extent of discretion unknown to any other Board or tribunal. He was bound to say that, as far as his experience went, the discretion exercised by the gentleman who held the office of Public Trustee had been wisely and judiciously used. But that was nothing to the purpose. What they were to consider was that the individual in question was invested with powers such as were unknown in connection with any other office in the Empire, so far as he was aware; and to add another matter for discretion was only emphasizing the anomalous position in which they were placing the Public Trustee. He would impress upon Parliament the necessity of setting up a Board of Control, or Advice, along with the Public Trustee,—a change which any gentleman in that position would no doubt welcome, for the responsibility attached to his office must be something tremendous under the present position of the law.

Mr. CARROLL said, with regard to the extraordinary power vested in the Public Trustee, that was a different question altogether from the question as to what was necessary to be done with regard to reserves on the West Coast owned by Natives. Under the present system the Natives were beginning to realise the benefits arising out of the Public Trustee's administration. Hitherto they had been for a considerable time under a variety of influences, and they could not be got to work under any Act in a satisfactory manner. Consequently, it was necessary that some one in whom the country had confidence—an independent man—should be given the power to administer their affairs. He might mention that there were 44,000 acres left in the hands of the Natives for their sole use and occupation. Their rents had increased under the administration of the Public Trustee during the last three years from £5,000-odd to £18,000, and if they went on as they were going there would soon be a considerable income to the Natives along that Coast. Furthermore, the administration had been so satisfactory of late that the Natives, instead of holding aloof as in former years, had come in under the administration, which they saw worked in a satisfactory manner to every one concerned. It was through the Public Trustee that certain rights were conceded to certain persons who had taken up leases from the Natives on their own account, which leases were afterwards termed "the confirmed leases." It was in consequence of these leases that litigation arose in the law-courts, to the detriment and disadvantage of the European lessees. Consequently, all parties appealed to Parliament. The Legislature considered that it was only fair and right that a just settlement should be effected between the disputants. He thought the honourable member for Waitotara knew as much about the particulars of these special cases as any one in that House. He did not see that any harm whatever had emanated from the administration of these estates by the Public Trustee, and there was no need to fear granting that officer powers wherewith to work the Act. With re-

gard to what fell from the honourable member for Egmont, he thought the honourable member was a little wrong. The leases he had referred to were of portions of the 44,000 acres which he (Mr. Carroll) had alluded to just before, which land was specially set apart for the Natives, and not included in the Public Trustee's leases. They did not come under the category of "the confirmed leases." They did not come under the class of leases leased by the Public Trustee, and the Europeans who took those leases knew very well at the time that they were doing an illegal thing, and they acted, no doubt, in the hope that at some future day some consideration would be given to their position, which they had created for themselves. That was the position, and the honourable gentleman's reference to the Act of last year as being a most beneficial one he quite agreed with. At the same time, he admired the force and vigour of the honourable gentleman in pleading on behalf of those who he considered had suffered considerably in consequence of certain action they had taken. But, going back to the Act of last session, he might point out that the honourable gentleman was a member of the Select Committee which considered that Act, and he then said that it was a very good Act, and he praised it, and so did he (Mr. Carroll), and the whole country; but that very Act did not include within the scope of its operation the leases just referred to by the honourable gentleman, because it was considered that it would not be a right thing to include them. He did not wish any false impression to get about, in consequence of the honourable gentleman's remarks, that the Government were responsible for these special cases.

Mr. McGUIRE desired to explain that he was placed on the Committee referred to by the honourable gentleman, but he resigned his position because he thought it wise that he should not act on it, and that he would be better able to give evidence than if he remained a member of the Committee. Therefore he resigned, and some one else was appointed in his place.

Mr. CARROLL said that was so. Still, the honourable gentleman was aware of every step that was taken in connection with this matter, and he must have been aware that the class of leases to which he referred so eloquently were specially left out last year because it was considered not proper to include them. But that was not the point. He thought the honourable gentleman should be satisfied with the suggestion that some consideration might be given in so far as the question affected improvements which had been made by the so-called lessees, although their leases were illegal. In speaking of improvements, he referred to their buildings and fences. Something should be done, he thought, so as to allow compensation of some kind to be made to those who had the greatest claim to it. But to admit that the leases could be legalized—to admit for one moment that they could take into their consideration the validation of leases made under

the circumstances under which those in question were made—was a thing he would not dare to ask the Legislature to do. It would be bad in principle, and would be establishing a very bad precedent, because if they legislated in that way this year there was no telling what they might be asked to do next year. It never was intended by the Legislature that there should be an illegal invasion of that 44,000 acres to which he had referred.

Bill read a third time.

ELLESMERE LAKE LANDS BILL.

On the order of the day being read for resuming the debate on the question, That a Committee be appointed to draw up reasons for disagreeing with amendments by the Legislative Council,

Mr. SEDDON said, after what had transpired, he would ask leave to withdraw his amendment to disagree with the amendments made by the Legislative Council in this Bill, and he would move, That the amendments be agreed to.

Amendment withdrawn, and amendments made by the Legislative Council agreed to.

SHOPS AND SHOP-ASSISTANTS BILL.

On the question of the commit of this Bill, Mr. DUTHIE said,—Sir, before the House goes into Committee on this Bill, this probably is the proper stage to examine its merits. Some two years ago, when a similar Bill was introduced, I moved that it be committed that day three months. I intend to move the same amendment to this Bill now. On that occasion, I regret to say, I only had the support of three members of the House. I trust, however, that, after the experience gained of this class of legislation in the interim, I shall receive a larger support on this occasion than was then accorded to me. On the second reading of the Bill, and on the suggestion of the honourable member for Inangahua, who proposed to extend this Bill to bars of licensed houses, and to hotel employés, I said I should be disposed to support him. But I do not intend to follow that course. One might feel, in reference to a Bill of this sort, that it was desirable to make it as obnoxious as possible by its severity, so that it should be rejected; but I rather feel it to be my duty to resist the Bill at all stages, and to reduce its severity, if it has to pass, as much as possible. The main ground for the rejection of this measure is the extraordinary interference with individual liberty that characterizes it throughout. It interferes with a class of men who at the present time are earning an honest living, and supporting their families, and who have considerable difficulty in doing so. It tends very seriously to divert the trade which this class—that is, the small traders—at present enjoy and by which they make their living. Then, this class of interference is obnoxious to employers at every stage, and there ought surely to be some strong State reason given before a Bill of this sort should be passed to interfere with employers, and compel

them to close their places of business, and, if they do not do so, to make such neglect a penal offence. The only justification for such a measure would lie in its being shown that, under the present conduct of shops, the assistants are so oppressed with long hours that they suffer in their health, and that it is therefore necessary for the State to interfere to save them from oppression. I do not think that can be contended at present. I have never heard the Minister, at any stage of the Bill, assert that such was the case, or that the assistants were suffering any hardship whatever at the hands of their employers. On the contrary, I believe that nowhere in any European or in any colonial community do the shop-assistants enjoy more liberty or shorter hours than in this colony. If one thinks of the hours of attendance required of shop-assistants in England and Scotland, and compares them with what exists in this country, it will be seen that this is a paradise indeed; so that these voluntary concessions made to employés in this colony show that there is a commendable disposition on the part of employers to make life as enjoyable as possible for their assistants. In redressing one wrong, the Legislature ought not to inflict another upon any section of the community. In this instance I fear a wrong of much greater degree will be inflicted on the employers, on their assistants, and on the general public. The Labour Bills Committee had before it numerous petitions and addresses from all parts and from all classes, but, necessarily, little attention was given to these representations; yet we are not justified in proceeding with the Bill without giving due consideration, and without seeing how it will affect any legitimate business. We find it is almost impossible to reconcile the diverse interests. We have, for instance, petitions from Auckland butchers urging that Saturday should be the day on which they should receive the half-holiday. In all other places that trade is content to take some intermediate day in the week. From Dunedin a large petition has been received to exempt Saturday altogether from the Bill. In Christchurch, one firm—that of Messrs. Strange and Co.—point out in their petition that they tried this half-holiday, and found that it made a loss in their returns of two or three hundred pounds a week. Everywhere this interference has brought injury and loss to the drapers, with whom shopping is mostly in afternoons: it is found to be a lost day. Now, Sir, employers have no large fund behind them on which to draw, and out of which they can afford to pay these further losses which it is proposed to inflict upon them. Trade is very keenly contested nowadays, and the effect of the present competition is to leave employers scarcely able to continue the present rate of wages or the present hours. The tendency of the competition is to drive employers to look for economy, to retrench, and to trench upon their assistants' emoluments, and upon their leisure. And, now, if legislation is to be passed to further adversely

affect employers, there is no help for them but to see where they can recoup the loss brought about by such interference, and none will suffer so much as their assistants. Employers cannot afford to increase working-expenses, at the present rate of profits. If they do, there can be only one result—that is, bankruptcy. Self-preservation drives employers to make two ends meet. If we refer to the report of the Labour Department we find that already there have been reductions of wages on account of this enforced half-holiday. The statement of the officer at Ashburton is that a deduction of wages has taken place on account of the half-holiday; and, in a report of a meeting of employers in this city, I notice that Mr. Fielder said that he could not afford to pay some thirty people for the loss of time involved by the half-holiday. He said he would have to reduce their wages proportionately. We have seen the effects of the existing Act, retrenchment taking this shape: Drapery establishments, as a matter of economy, have retrenched their senior hands, and advanced juniors, at a lower rate of pay, to fill the positions, and so reduced their working-expenses. I mention this to show that it is adverse to the interests of the shop-assistants, and that this Bill will be no boon to them. Then, the tendency is to follow American practice in business management in the future. Mention has been made in the Press of suggestions that threatened the adoption of the American system. Hitherto there has been a deal of the Old World good-feeling and sympathy existing between employers and assistants. There has been a good deal of "give and take," and little desire to drive things down to the lowest possible limit; but legislation such as is proposed here induced in America a system of paying by the hour, in place of paying by the week. Employers there, in many cities, simply put men on at so much per hour. The result of this is that there are a whole lot of unemployed young men wandering about the streets eager to get even a few hours' employment daily in the endeavour to keep body and soul together. Large drapers employ only a few in the morning, and take on extra hands in the afternoon, and as soon as the work is over these men are sent about their business. It is a cruel system, and it will be deeply regretted if the present kindly and sympathetic feeling existing between employers and their assistants is to be wiped away, and those hard relations substituted; but nothing else can result if such a Bill as this is given effect to. Another result will be that the assistants who have to accept these reduced wages will be discontented, necessitating their displacement by others. It is to be regretted that, on account of the outcry of a few thoughtless youths, we should pass legislation of this sort, and I feel it will bring disaster to the young men in whose interest it is said to have been introduced. Then, we have these small shopkeepers. The keeping of small shops is a way by which young men advance themselves. They may have been employes, and, after saving a little

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money, they start shops for themselves; and these shops serve a want that is felt throughout the community. There are people who cannot always buy in the middle of the day; they are engaged at their employment, and they want somewhere to go in the evening to buy. These small shops fill that want. They suit the customers, and, at the same time, give these young men who are starting an opportunity of making a business; by-and-by, when they can afford it, and do not require to work such long hours, they close their shops just as early as the larger shopkeepers do. But in the earlier stage of their career they take advantage of the want existing in the community, and so succeed in establishing themselves in business. Probably, in this town of Wellington there are five or six hundred of this class of shops. These men depend upon the evening trade, especially the Saturday night trade. When the bigger shops are closed they expect to make their money. Their stock is not large enough to enable them to compete with the larger shops, but by suiting the public convenience they are able to make a living and to provide for their families. And why should a number of the public who are depending on them be deprived of this convenience? It would be most disastrous to this class of people. Then, in carrying out this drastic measure and insisting on the closing of shops, a number of special trades are to be inconvenienced. There is the fruit trade. There is, as a petition from Christchurch pointed out, a class of fruit which, at certain seasons, ripens from day to day. I do not know whether the Government intend to regulate the movements of the sun so that it shall not get up and ripen such fruit to be wasted. I refer to fruits such as raspberries, strawberries, and fruits of that class. In their season they are enjoyable, and should be eaten; but if shops are closed on Saturday much must perish—I suppose, all for the glory and advancement of Liberal laws! Then, after all, what are men to do with the evening? The shops are closed; the streets are in darkness. Men now come down town; it is one enjoyment of their life; the man, home from his week's toil, and with the wages he has earned, goes shopping with his wife. Why are they to be debarred from this convenience and enjoyment? If a man wants to purchase a stick of tobacco, is he to be debarred from that? Are tobacconists to be closed up? Or, say, a man wants his hair cut, he is not to be allowed to have it cut, or even to be shaved. A man commits a crime if he has his shop open to shave a man or to cut his hair. Chemists are to be seriously inconvenienced. There is some relaxation in the case of chemists, but before they are closed even as proposed some good and sufficient reason should be shown why they should be closed arbitrarily. Then, if we go outside the towns to look at the working of the Act in the country, or even in the town districts: a man is away at work at some kind of occupation; he may be employed as a carpenter on a building, or in fencing, or in some

other occupation, and on Saturday afternoon he comes home and brings his week's wages, expecting to go back to work on the following Monday. He comes into town to purchase goods, and finds every door closed against him, and he is unable to purchase the supplies he requires. Why should such inconvenience be caused? Then, we are going to make it a crime to buy a loaf of bread, for a child to buy a bag of lollies, or a woman a reel of cotton. What state of things are we coming to? If we are to enforce this law we shall have to treble the Police Force and have an army of detectives. Then, it will be impossible to get the people to regard the infringement of an Act of this sort as a sin, and it must have a very bad effect on the morality of the people. If in connection with the ordinary vocations of life we are going to make such things a crime, and an infringement of the law, every one will be brought to think that really, after all, there is no wrong in infringing the law. This would have a most demoralising effect on the community. Looking at the Bill in all its aspects, from the point of view of employers and employés and the general public,—which last ought very largely to be considered,—objections to it are innumerable. It is brimful of inconsistencies and absurdities, and there ought to be some very sound and good reason given before legislation of this sort is brought into operation at all. If people have suffered any wrong the wrong ought to be redressed; but there has been no wrong here to redress. This measure is simply pandering to an outcry, because a few shop-assistants have managed to affiliate themselves—I think that is what they call it—with some unionist association, and a certain voting-power is supposed to attach to this measure. But, come what may, we have our duty to do. In the position of representatives, I do not think we ought to consider anything but what is best for the public interests in this matter. The Bill is brimful of inconsistencies and of unwarrantable interferences with large public and private interests, and is not the way to remedy the hardship it is intended to redress. Hoping to receive a much larger support than was given me two years ago, I feel it my duty to move, That this Bill be committed this day three months.

Mr. FISH.—Sir, I have given this measure very great consideration and attention, and I am largely actuated, in the vote I intend to give to-night, by what I believe to be the strong public opinion of my constituents, and by my own convictions resulting from observation and experience. Sir, last session we passed a Bill—not the Bill we have before us to-night, but a different one—the Shop-hours Bill as amended by the Legislative Council is the one now in existence—and shortly after that Bill became law we had public meetings in Dunedin upon the subject of the Bill, and more particularly as to the day that should be observed as a holiday; and also whether that day, when once decided upon, should be made compulsory or not. Under the pro-

visions of the Act, that could not be done; but an arrangement was entered into by a large number of our shopkeepers in Dunedin that they would try the effect of closing on Saturday afternoon, that being the apparent wish of a large majority of the assistants. Well, Sir, that experiment has been tried. Without saying more on this subject at present, I only say that, as far as I am concerned, the experiment has proved to me that there is no necessity for the Bill that is at present before the House, as the one we have in existence meets all the necessities of the case, and we should do well to leave well alone. I therefore need hardly say that I intend to support the amendment moved by the honourable member for Wellington City. At the meetings in Dunedin to which I referred, in one of which I took a part, I expressed my opinion that, whatever day was ultimately fixed upon, that day should be made compulsory by law; but I carefully refrained, in the remarks I made, from stating what day that should be, because I looked upon the whole matter as quite an experiment, which would be settled by the necessities of the case as proved to the shopkeepers after a trial. Well, as I have said, a large number of shopkeepers of Dunedin did give this matter a trial, and the result of the trial has been an almost unanimous consensus of opinion on their part that the day is an unsuitable one for them. That was very simply proved by the *Otago Daily Times*, which paper went to the trouble and expense of sending a special reporter round to the various shops to make inquiries, and the large majority of replies given to those inquiries were in the direction of showing that Saturday, at any rate, was an unsuitable day in the interests of the shopkeepers. As I have said, I thought at that time that a day should be settled—no matter what day—and should be compulsory. I have now to declare that in that respect I have changed my mind. We have a law declaring that every shop-assistant throughout the colony shall have one half-holiday a week, and it is left for the people to decide what day that shall be. Now, I feel quite satisfied on this point: that if the Bill we passed last session still remains on the statute-book, and we have no further legislation—at any rate, speaking for the people of Dunedin—they will give a unanimous decision that the whole of the shops should close on Wednesday or Thursday in the week instead of Saturday, and they will settle the compulsory difficulty for themselves without further coercive legislation on the part of this House. Let me ask the House to consider who they are that are asking for a compulsory holiday on Saturday. Those who are asking for it are simply the shopkeepers' assistants. And what is the reason, the main reason, that these gentlemen—for whom I have every respect—give for asking that Saturday shall be made the compulsory day of closing? Their chief reason is that on that day the mercantile offices, the lawyers' offices, the professional men's offices, and the factories close, and that it is, consequently, the day upon which

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the sports of the city are carried out. Now, Sir, so far as the sports are concerned, if that is the ideal that the shopkeepers' assistant seeks to obtain—if that is the goal of his ambition—to witness sports, and to choose Saturday because he can witness sports on that day, then I have only to say, in answer to that, that it cannot matter to him, because the shopkeepers' assistants in any large city and suburbs are sufficiently numerous to form athletic clubs and athletic societies in, from, and by themselves, and they can have sports as much as ever they choose. But when this agitation was first commenced there was no question raised as to the day upon which the half-holiday should be given. The question was one which I supported to the utmost of my ability, and what we were asked for was that we should simply give the shopkeepers' assistants throughout the colony a half-holiday during the week—one half-day's cessation from toil—and in that respect I was thoroughly with them, and I am now as thoroughly with them as I was then. Some ask for it for the reasons that I have stated—their desire to see sports, and that it was a general half-holiday. Others wish it for nobler reasons, from higher impulses than this. They say that they desire to improve their minds, to have time to cultivate themselves, to have time to repair the wants in this respect that they have experienced in their youth. Others, again, say, "We want a half-holiday in the week in order to go out and enjoy ourselves under God's beautiful sky. We want fresh air; we want to renovate our health. We suffer from long confinement in shops, and we think it is absolutely necessary for our comfort and health that we should get a half-holiday in the week for recreative and other purposes of that kind." Sir, I ask you and other honourable gentlemen, if that be the aim, and if that be the desire—and I believe it really and truly is with the bulk of shop-assistants—what can it possibly matter to them whether they have the day for this purpose on the Saturday or any other day? If the aim and object be—which it was, and really is now—to obtain a half-day's cessation from severe and exacting toil—because, although the work in which shop-assistants are engaged is not arduous in its character, so far as manual labour is concerned, it is arduous, and more arduous than manual labour, from the fact of the confinement which they suffer—I am entirely with them and those who sympathize with them in giving them and continuing to them the half-holiday; but I am quite sure it is not necessary for them, or for the purpose which they ought to seek to attain, that that should be any particular day of the week. Now, so much for the shop-assistants. I have said that they should be considered; I have said that they should have their recreation, that they should have this half-holiday. But let me ask another thing: Are the employers of the shop-assistants to have no consideration? Are we first to give to the shop-assistants the half-holiday, and then to listen to and accede to the further demand as to their having one

particular day in the week? Surely, it must argue a certain amount of selfishness and ingratitude on the part of these young men when they are not satisfied with getting what they first asked for, which was a half-holiday, but must insist on having it on a certain day, when to close their places of business on that day, they know themselves, and their employers know, must and will end in disastrous loss to their employers. Surely we are not here to legislate only for one class. Others have claims and rights to be considered; others have susceptibilities we have a duty to consider; others have rights as well as those; and we are no true representatives of the people unless we give to all sections of the community that liberty of conscience, that protection, and that justice which each and all deserve alike. Sir, I have referred incidentally to the fact that closing on Saturday is a loss to the shopkeepers. I have no hesitation in saying that this is proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. At first it was stated that any trade that lost by closing on Saturday afternoon would be recouped by the extra trade done during the other days of the week. The experience of the shopkeepers of the City of Dunedin—an experience which I have no doubt has been shared in by the shopkeepers of other large cities—is that the trade lost on Saturday does not come back during the other days of the week. It may appear strange, at the first glance, that this should be so, but if you reason the matter out you will find there is nothing strange about it. From time immemorial Saturday has been the day upon which most people, especially English people, do their marketing. Saturday marketing has not been the growth of a month, of a year, or two or three years, but has been the growth, I think I may say, of centuries; and it is the day, and the only day, in the week upon which people will come from the country districts and spend their money in the towns. If a man—a farmer, we will say, or any country person—does not come in on a Saturday afternoon to the markets of the colony, which are the principal towns, he fails to come, in the great majority of cases, at other times during the week. It may be asked, "What does it matter if this is so? What does it matter if this causes a loss of trade to the shopkeepers? It is gained by others in the country districts." That may be true to a large extent; but it must be borne in mind that the chances are very considerably in favour of this proposition: that the unfortunate consumer has to pay the difference between the prices in the city, where large competition exists, and those higher prices which must necessarily prevail in the country district, where he may reside. At any rate, it is useless speaking of principles; it is useless asking for reasons. We have got the fact,—the hard, bald fact before us in the City of Dunedin, that, after prolonged trial most loyally and heroically carried out by the majority who accepted the Saturday half-holiday, they have found, as a result of that trial, that it is as I have stated; and that is a fact

beyond which we cannot and must not go. And, Sir, if that be the fact—and I challenge contradiction of it—then I say again to you honourable gentlemen here, have you not a duty to give some heed to the man who is as industrious as his employé, who has gained the means of becoming an employer through frugality, sobriety, and industry? Are you, by legislation of this kind, which is hardly any good to the employé—are you to be asked to do great wrong and injury to the employer? I say distinctly—and I challenge contradiction upon this point—that it cannot matter to an individual, if he simply wants recreation, if he simply wants fresh air, if he simply wants the opportunity to improve and cultivate his mind—it cannot matter to that person whether he gets that means of cultivation, improvement, or recreation on a Wednesday, Thursday, or Saturday; and therein lies the whole strength of my argument. I submit very humbly to this House that that argument is irresistible. Now, Sir, there are many and various reasons given why Saturday should be made the compulsory day, besides those I have already advanced. One reason I have heard is that if Wednesday or Thursday were made the half-holiday compulsorily it would affect wholesale houses, factories, *et cetera*. I know very well that, when the petition was being hawked round Dunedin which was subsequently presented to this House, the canvassers with that petition openly stated, in dozens and hundreds of cases, in order to obtain signatures, "If you do not sign this petition, and if Saturday is not made the compulsory day for the half-holiday, all the factories, all the wholesale warehouses, all the foundries, and those places which now close on Saturday will be compelled to remain open." And by that means a very large number of signatures were obtained. As a matter of fact, if any other day than Saturday is made the half-holiday, then it will not affect one of those people in the slightest degree. Merchants will close their places on Saturday, professional men will do ditto, and the factories and the foundries, and, in point of fact, all labour-employing businesses except the retail shops will observe that day as a half-holiday the same in the future as they do in the present. Another reason I have heard why the day should be Saturday, and why it should be made compulsory, is that there are retail houses which carry on factory business in addition to their ordinary retail business. That that is so I admit, but I see no difficulty in the way there whatever. If it were fixed that Wednesday or Thursday should be the day for closing, what would occur would be simply this: that the retail shops—that is, the places where retail goods are sold—would be closed on Wednesday afternoon; and, whilst they were closed to the public for the purpose of selling, the factory hands employed in the same building would remain in the workshop, and, supervised and superintended by foremen and forewomen, the factory part of the business would be carried on just the same as it is at the present time; and those factory hands, with

the factory hands employed in factories where nothing else but factory work is done, would get the holiday on the same day as at present. It may be said that it is quite useless for me to argue about Saturday or any other day being made a compulsory holiday, because in the Bill now presented to the House it is provided that the local bodies shall have power to alter the day from Saturday to another day if the majority of the representatives of the local bodies think fit so to do. That is quite true, but I am entirely opposed to this matter being referred to the local bodies at all. I say it will cause a considerable amount of unnecessary expense; it will also cause a considerable amount of unnecessary trouble, bother, and friction; and, if it be wise to legislate in this matter at all,—which I say most distinctly it is not,—then, I say, whatever legislation is to be done should be done and finished in this House, and there should be no further bother about it. Now, Sir, I would put this case before the honourable gentleman: The Bill provides that large cities and suburbs shall be grouped together, and that each one of the suburban districts shall send a member to a conference, which may be called by, I think, the Mayor of the principal town, and that cities shall send a number equal to the number sent by the suburbs combined, and they shall sit in conference and decide what day shall be fixed upon. At first sight, that appears very fair to the cities, because they would have at any rate half the votes, and unless something peculiar occurred they would be very likely to get their way if they were all unanimous. But there is another factor to be thought out and dealt with that I would point out to this House: that it is not so good for a principal city as may at first sight appear, and for this very simple reason: that, I believe, the suburbs of the principal cities have already found that by the shops in those cities closing on Saturday their small businesses in the suburbs are considerably augmented; and, that being the case, probably sufficient influence may be brought to bear to get the representatives of the suburban boroughs to keep the day Saturday, in order that they may continue to reap the benefit they are already reaping through the shops in the principal cities being closed on Saturday. People do not go so readily to the principal city during any other of the working-days. Now, I am certain of this: that if this Bill be thrown out, either in this House or in the other, no trouble at all will ensue; and, before I go further, I may say that I do not think the House is acting in a manful way in honourable members giving their votes for a measure which they dislike and do not wish to see passed, simply because they think the other Chamber will give the Bill the *coup de grace*. A member should vote according to his conscience, and not leave to his brother in the higher Chamber the task of doing what he is ashamed to do himself. As I have said, if this Bill should be rejected by this Chamber, which I trust it will be, no harm will result to the shopkeepers' assistants. They will

get their half-holiday, and I cannot see, as I have already said, that it matters to them which day it is; and if the shopkeepers find there is to be no further interference by the Legislature they will take, almost universally, some day other than Saturday which will suit them, and things will go quite swimmingly and well. I would say that, unless strong reasons are given, this Chamber should hesitate in the adoption of coercive legislation of any kind whatever. If the amelioration of a certain class of workers can be brought about without coercive legislation being passed by Parliament, then it is far wiser that we should not pass such legislation,—because I do not think I am wrong in hazarding the opinion that the people of this colony are beginning to awake to the fact that they are getting too much coercive legislation, and that Parliament is seeking to control and fetter too much the action of the individual. I have warned the honourable gentleman, and will warn him again, that this coercion will have an effect that will surprise many more besides the honourable gentleman. Enough is enough, Sir, but too much of a good thing is not good for anybody. I will warn the shopkeepers' assistants that if they go too far in this matter, and are not satisfied with the inestimable boon already conferred upon them, it will react against them, and the inevitable effect will be the reduction of their salaries, as the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) has so ably pointed out, or the introduction of that very pernicious system of payment by the hour. And let me again say to the shopkeepers' assistants, they are demanding and receiving more consideration than the labourers and artisans of the colony. What do we do with our workmen? They have had a Saturday half-holiday, not by law but by custom and common consent, for years and years. There is no employer in trade who for one moment seeks to say there shall be no Saturday half-holiday. What is the position of working-men who take a Saturday half-holiday? They are paid so much per day, so much per hour; and for every half-holiday, not only Saturday but other days—fast-days, and so forth—the workers, the mechanics, the labourers of all trades and branches, lose their pay. And therefore I say that the shopkeepers' assistants occupy an immeasurably better position than their brother-workers do of whom I have spoken; for shop-assistants get paid for holidays, such as the Queen's Birthday, and others, and that is not the case with the mechanic or the labourer, as my honourable friends perfectly well know. Looking at these things in this light, I do not think it wise to pass this legislation when in all probability the effect of it will be to react against the very class for whose benefit we are legislating. I am as sincere in this matter as any one can be; I am as earnest in my advocacy now as I have been in the past, and shall be in the future, of all legitimate means for ameliorating the condition of workers of any description, but I shall not go one inch beyond what it is

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necessary to confer on those people, if it is in the direction of injuring other people. That is the position I have always taken up, and I shall not, under any circumstances, budge one single inch from it. One man is as good to me as another, and, while I shall do my best to support labour, I shall not be one to illegitimately hurt or destroy the interests of the employer. Another effect of this legislation will be the absolute ruin of all small shopkeepers. And any one who keeps his eyes open will see that the large shopkeepers, for whom some honourable members profess to have no sympathy, hail this measure with much satisfaction, because they see as clearly as I do that it simply means the extinction of the small trader. Surely our legislation should not tend to destroy the small shopkeeper. As I have pointed out, the shop-assistants get the immeasurable boon of a half-holiday; and why should they insist on saying what that day shall be? Now, I have been told that, because I am taking up this position, I shall lose the votes of those of my constituents who are shop-assistants; but I know that among those men there are plenty who are possessed of common-sense and sound judgment; and I say that, notwithstanding the attitude I am taking up, which is a bold and manly one, I shall get a large number of their votes. But if it were to cost me every vote of the shopkeepers' assistants in whatever constituency I shall aspire to at the next election, I should still pursue the course I think to be the right one, utterly regardless of consequences in a political sense. I shall be told by-and-by by the Minister that this is a measure of the greatest importance—if he condescends to say anything;—and that he takes great interest in the matter, Sir, is evidenced by the close attention he is paying now to the duties of his office, and the keen intelligence with which he has listened to the arguments of those who are opposed to him, seeing that the honourable gentleman is absent from his place. It is really creditable to the Government, and to the honourable gentleman, that he should show this great attention to what he will presently tell us, if he deigns to speak at all, is labour legislation of the greatest importance. I look around me, Sir, and what I thought was a figure I find to be space—emptiness. The Minister is not here looking after this important legislation he is bringing in. What a sorry spectacle is this: that the Minister of Labour, when one of his bantlings is waiting to be brought into active life, is conspicuous by his absence! I was about to say, when my attention was diverted by the shadow which I thought I discerned there, that this is not labour legislation at all, in the true sense, and I think those honourable members who call themselves labour representatives with myself will admit as much as that. Now, I have had, Sir, a considerable correspondence—letters sent to me by gentlemen in Dunedin who are greatly interested in this Bill, because they know that if this legislation is

passed, and this Bill is carried, they will be done an irreparable injury, which they say no legislation and no local body has any right to inflict upon them. They remind me, in terms most pathetic and true, that what they have gained they have gained by honest industry, arduous toil, and strict sobriety and attention to business. They fail to see the justice of any Legislature or local body saying to them that they shall not have opportunities of continuing to earn their bread by honesty and thrift in the future as they have done in the past, and they feel bitterly that legislation of this kind should be pressed to their detriment and possible ruin. And no wonder that they write and speak in no hesitating tones to a man whose sympathies they think they can secure, and whose sympathies they have got. I will read to the House, if it will permit me, a few sentences which I have culled from the sheaf of letters I have received on the subject from men whose livelihood is threatened by this Bill. They say, generally, that they do not want any further legislation, but they fear they are not strong enough, or that their friends in this House are not strong enough, to prevent that, and in some letters they submit alternative proposals if they cannot escape legislation. One says, "In respect of the day, Wednesday or Thursday by all means rather than Saturday; but better still leave the law as it is, or better again, repeal the law of last session." There was a very large meeting of shopkeepers held in Dunedin, and they passed certain resolutions, amongst other things; and they had a long conversation over their impending troubles. They carried this request to me: "(1.) Vote against the whole Bill. (2.) Vote against a compulsory half-holiday on Saturday. (3.) If there must be a compulsory half-holiday, make it Wednesday or Thursday." Another correspondent says,—

"The mischief done by the Saturday half-holiday is now so fully recognised that we believe large numbers of shops now closing will open on Saturdays if the Act is left as it is, and matters will be brought to a crisis so far as the day is concerned. A boot shop, which used to take £100 on Saturday, now never gets to £5, and does not make it up."

There has been a petition presented to this House, presumably containing a large number of signatures. I went attentively over those signatures, and I discovered, myself, quite easily, that fully one-third of the names were bogus; they were names which had no right to be there at all. The petitions were signed by a large number of women of all descriptions; they were signed by a large number of young girls; and they were signed, sometimes, five, six, and seven times over by the same person. A correspondent of mine, writing from Dunedin, has given me an instance of what happened at a concert he was at one Saturday evening. He was attending a concert at the Garrison Hall with a friend, and a gentleman, with a petition, came round and asked him and his friend to sign. He

thought to himself, "Oh! it is all right; I don't care whether I sign it or not. Yes, I will sign it." They presently moved to another part of the hall, and they were asked to sign again; and, being, as he said, of a very accommodating turn of mind, he signed the petition again. They shifted twice again during the evening, and signed twice more, and on going out they signed again. Five times these two men signed in this building. There were about three hundred and fifty at the concert; and yet it will surprise honourable gentlemen to learn that the petition received no fewer than one thousand five hundred signatures at that meeting. Then, my correspondent states that on the following day the petition was brought to his house in Castle Street, and he signed again, and later in the day the petition was once more presented to him, and he signed it twice more. That gentleman's name was on the petition seven times. I suppose he signed it in order to show the value of such petitions. At the corners of streets, and at the fountain in the Square, young boys and youths were seen signing these petitions over and over again. And this is what we are asked to believe is a *bonâ fide* petition, and should have some weight with this Chamber. I would not give a snap of the finger for nine petitions out of every ten presented to either branch of the Legislature. My correspondent goes on to say,—

"The petition presented in favour of Saturday is about the biggest fraud ever attempted to be foisted upon a Legislature and a community, but, as this has been publicly proclaimed by responsible men, and no response made or contradiction attempted, the matter may be dismissed."

Then, another correspondent says,—

"It should always be kept in view that a half-holiday means from a business point of view a whole holiday to all intents and purposes. Mr. Emery, of Inglis's, and a number of others, assured me that it is so, and that if they did not pay their hands for the half-day, and kept their doors closed, there would be an absolute profit. There never was much business done on a Saturday morning, and since the country people have ceased to come in there is less of course."

Now, I am a trader, and I can vouch from my own knowledge for the entire accuracy of the statement made there. We know that in the large drapery and boot shops the whole morning is occupied by the hands of the establishment in getting the stock in order, in sweeping out the place, and getting ready for the afternoon's and evening's trade. Therefore, if they lose the afternoon's and evening's trade, they might just as well—as my correspondent says—be closed for the whole day, and if they did not pay the men for the morning's half-holiday it would be an absolute profit to the shopkeeper. Another correspondent says,—

"It is quite plain that the feeling is growing on the public mind that this class of legislation is improper and undesirable. It is estimated that in George Street alone the yearly loss is

Mr. Fish

£70,000. If the loss to the whole city is anything like that—and I am certain it is more—surely the thing is serious enough."

I presented a petition to this House, signed by 251 shopkeepers, and my correspondent who sent me the petition says in relation to it,—

"There are 251 signatures. Many more could have been got in the suburbs if we had taken time, but five or six of us have done all the work ourselves, and we could not spare the time. They are all genuine signatures of shopkeepers. My work in collecting signatures has opened my eyes in an unexpected manner to the state of feeling amongst the shopkeepers and working-men carrying on small businesses. Many of them are intensely bitter at Messrs. Pinkerton and Earnshaw for supporting this restrictive class of legislation. Many aver, as is stated in the petition, that they will defy the law as far as in them lies, and will do business at the back-door if they cannot do it by the front—a nice state of things, tending greatly to create law-abiding citizens! Numbers of them reminded me that Mr. Earnshaw had stated that he admitted that many small shopkeepers would have to go to the wall as the result of Liberal legislation; but it cannot be helped, he said. 'A nice sentiment, surely,' they said, 'to come from a labour candidate and man of the people.' 'Lord! how some of them did rave!' 'No more labour candidates for me,' was stated over and over again."

My correspondent is known to almost every Otago member. He is a man of the highest respectability, of the greatest probity, and of extensive and large intelligence; and I believe that not only is he uttering the sentiments coming from his own wounded heart, but he is echoing the sentiments of the large bulk of the middle-classes in Dunedin, and the large bulk of the better class of our working fellow-colonists; and I am perfectly certain, in saying this, that the intelligence that is inherent in the masses, and which is exceeded possibly by that of the middle-classes, is being stirred up by this constant and irritating interference with their liberties and their trade. They are irritated up to the extent that is in accordance with the old saying, that "It is the last straw which breaks the camel's back." Much more of this will tend to change law-abiding citizens into open, or covert and secret, defiers of the law; and I ask again, is that a state of civilisation which we ought to be proud to bring about in this beautiful colony? I speak to-night with a sense of great responsibility upon me, not only on account of the men whose cause I plead, but also to a large extent on account of myself. I may be doing that which may injure me politically considerably. I do not know. I do not care. So long as I know, or feel, I am doing right, I care not one single rush for the consequences which may overtake me, politically speaking. But, Sir, I would appeal to the honourable gentleman to say that he has awakened to wisdom—to say that he is trying to mend the evil courses of the last two years.

Mr. REEVES.—What courses?

Mr. FISH.—I am not alluding to the course I supported. I am alluding to other and more devious courses which my common-sense and sense of justice would not allow me to follow him in. That is the portion of his policy I am referring to.

Mr. REEVES.—Not to the Shop-hours Bill?

Mr. FISH.—And the honourable gentleman would do well to report progress on this Bill, and let us hear of it no more. It would be far better for him gracefully to give way to what he must know is the prevailing sentiment in the land than to have his vanity hurled back upon him by another Chamber. Let him take advice from a gentleman who is desirous of being his friend, who is desirous of doing that which will rehabilitate him politically in the eyes of the multitude, and let him try to gain the abiding respect of the working-classes to whom he panders too much now, and he will also gain, if he takes my advice and follows it, the respect and esteem of all classes of the community. The views I have very humbly, and unintelligibly I fear, endeavoured to give utterance to to-night are shared by all the large centres of the public. I have in my hand now resolutions that were passed at a very large meeting of shopkeepers held in Christchurch. Mr. C. P. Hulbert, who, I think, occupied at one time the position of Mayor, presided at a meeting; and these were the resolutions that were passed:—

“That the shopkeepers and retail traders of Christchurch and suburbs strongly protest against the compulsory clauses in the Shop-hours Bill now before Parliament, considering the same to be unnecessary and tyrannical.

“They submit that the Act now in force regulating the hours of labour and providing holidays for shop-assistants meets all requirements.

“They further submit that, as yet, no proof has been adduced as to the necessity for shopkeepers being specially selected for such exceptional legislation.”

Well, those are the opinions of the Christchurch shopkeepers. They are the opinions of the Dunedin shopkeepers. I believe they are the opinions of the Wellington shopkeepers. For Auckland I cannot speak, but I have no doubt, with the good sense with which they are usually justly credited, that their opinions are much in the direction of those I have given utterance to. Now, considering all these things, would it not be wiser on the part of the Minister to accept a friendly resolution that is now before the House, and vote that the Bill be committed this day three months? It may be said, possibly, by the honourable member—I do not think it will be, or by any other honourable member—that I am acting inconsistently to-night. I am doing nothing of the kind. I thought so! I have found the honourable gentleman out. My knowledge of the honourable gentleman has enabled me to find him out. I shall defy him to say that I have done anything inconsistent. I have never gone the length of this Bill.

Mr. REEVES.—Oh! you went a great deal further.

Mr. FISH.—Then I shall be glad to know it. I took up this question of the half-holiday for the shop-assistants before the honourable gentleman became a Liberal at all. My Liberalism was the result of years of study. My advocacy of Liberal legislation was not a sudden growth. It was not a flower to bloom suddenly and then to fade away with the first parching winds. My Liberalism grew up with me from boyhood to manhood, and it still remains a hale tree yet. I have never gone the length the honourable gentleman has desired to go; and let me tell him this—Now, the honourable gentleman is going for a book, I know, in order to convict me of some tremendous inconsistency. He need not trouble himself. I will add to what I have already said that, if he can convict me of having said twenty times less or more than I have said now, it will not alter my ideas one bit, because I need not remind him of what he has often been reminded, that wise men change their opinions, fools never. I believe I am advocating the honest and the best course, not only for the shop-assistants, for whom this legislation is desired to be carried, but for the community generally; and I hope that I have impressed one or two members of this House with the desirability of eschewing party altogether in the consideration of this Bill, and if their honest convictions lead them to the opinion that this Bill is not desirable, and not wise to pass, I ask them as men of common-sense and honour, as they are, irrespective of party, to go into the lobby that their conscience directs them to go into.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I do not intend to prolong this debate, so far as I am concerned, but I should not like it to fall through without saying a few words. I do wish to say this: that I think, if the mass of the people were looking round this Assembly now, when a measure of this importance is being discussed, and saw the state of the Ministerial benches, the attitude assumed by the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill, and saw members all round asleep, or half asleep, when the Bill is being discussed, they would not think very highly of their representatives.

Mr. REEVES.—What attitude?

Mr. ROLLESTON.—Partly out of the House, and partly lying at full length, and generally showing a carelessness of attitude.

Mr. REEVES.—I think that is exceedingly rude. The honourable gentleman is often asleep himself.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I am not in a position of responsibility like the honourable gentleman—in charge of a Bill of the largest importance of any that could come before the House. This Bill involves a large amount of suffering, as, I believe, to numbers of persons; and, at the same time, it is a Bill that professes to be in the interests of some classes of the community, whereas I believe that, on the whole, the Bill will be mischievous. I only wish to indicate my own feeling on this Bill. I have thought

a great deal on this subject. I approached it on previous occasions with a desire to support it; but after mature consideration I have come to the conclusion that it is not possible to put on the statute-book a Bill that would satisfactorily deal with this question. I am confident that this particular Bill is, first of all, opposed to principles which I myself have always endeavoured to support and advocate—those of personal liberty. Sir, it is against the interests, as I believe, of a large class of retail dealers who are struggling in the world, endeavouring to carry on an honest trade and make an honest living. It is, I believe, against the interests of the working-men, and is certain sooner or later to interfere with wages. It is impossible for the Legislature to touch a question of this kind and to insist upon proposals of this kind without ultimately affecting the wages and material comfort and happiness of those who are most concerned. Sir, I think the Bill will work disastrously with regard to a large class of the people who now have a half-holiday on the Saturday. It will interfere with school-teachers and with others who make Saturday their shopping-day. It is absolutely impossible so to legislate as between trade and trade as not to do injustice. If you take the butchers or fruiterers, they must either break the law or be ruined. That is the conclusion I have come to with regard to it. I do not wish to detain the House. I shall vote against the Bill sadly, because I should like to see the half-holiday established if it could be done, but without the slightest hesitation I shall vote against this Bill, because it is impracticable, and because the details of it have not been fully worked out. This Bill insists upon Saturday being a compulsory half-holiday, but allows the day to be altered by the local bodies. How is that to be done? By special order of a Municipality. How long will it take to give effect to the special order of the Municipality? Four solid weeks at the least. In the case of Christchurch, where the whole of the surrounding district does its business on Saturday, it will take four weeks to have a special order of the Municipality of Christchurch given effect to—if you can get it, and it is not at all certain you may get it. Further than that, the city has to come to an agreement with I do not know how many boroughs—but four or five would be within the mark—before they can decide as to the day to be observed as a holiday. Is it a right thing that the whole of the population of that large district should be inconvenienced for four or five weeks? It shows a cruel carelessness of the interests of those people to propose such a thing. I have done. If this Bill is carried I have no hesitation in saying that it will do a gross injustice to a large part of the community.

Mr. SHERA.—I listened with very great attention to the speeches of the honourable member for Wellington City (Mr. Duthie) and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish): and I may say it gives me very great pleasure when I can agree occasionally with any of their views. To-night, I regret to say,

Mr. Rolleston

I cannot agree with any of the views they have advanced in connection with this Bill. The views I hold in reference to the Bill are diametrically opposed to everything they have said. The large shopkeepers in Auckland, I believe, are in favour of the Bill, and the great mass of the small traders are in favour of the Bill, and also the shop-assistants. The honourable member for Dunedin City spoke for Christchurch, Wellington, and Dunedin. Whether he spoke correctly or not I cannot say, but I am satisfied of this: that the ghosts of disaster he raised up were the mere phantoms of his own brain. He has spoken of his Liberalism, and how it budded, bloomed, and blossomed: he omitted to tell us how it faded. I am just reminded it was something like Jonah's gourd—it came in the night, and it vanished in the night. He has deserted the shop-assistants and shopkeepers: because the shopkeepers want the holiday just as much as the shop-assistants. I must say I have very great pleasure in congratulating the Minister on the Bill as it has now come down from the Labour Bills Committee, and I hope it will go through Committee to-night. I would just draw attention to one amendment in a clause which has been inserted by the Labour Bills Committee, and I think it will meet with the approval of a great many traders throughout the colony who are opposed to the general principle of the Bill—that is, the general principle of the half-holiday on Saturday. It is just this: There is a power given to Borough Councils to appoint a special day in respect to any special class of shops. This will meet the case of fruiterers, butchers, barbers, and others, who may make known their wishes to the local authorities, who no doubt will comply with their wishes. I have great pleasure in supporting the motion for the committal of the Bill, and in voting against the amendment. I hope the Bill will go through Committee to-night.

Sir R. STOUT.—I intend to vote for the Bill going into Committee, but I intend to propose some amendments to it, which I hope the Committee will agree to. I would first of all point out that, I think, the class of shops for which there is to be a compulsory half-holiday will have to be altered. I do not think we can do better than copy the English Act of 1882. That Act was most carefully drawn and thought out. Now, in that Act the word "shop" is thus defined: "'Shop' means retail and wholesale shops, markets, stalls, and warehouses in which assistants are employed for hire, and includes licensed publichouses and refreshment-houses of any kind." That is the English law. I do not understand, if we are going to have a Shop-hours Bill such as the Bill before us, why, for example, a fruiterer who sells fruit is to have his place shut up, and the publichouse that sells whiskey is to be allowed to keep open. I say that is utterly wrong, and against the good of the community. Therefore I submit that you must be consistent. I do not say the publichouses should be shut up, but I do say the bars of the publichouses must be deemed to be shops. I appeal to

honourable members here to say if that is not a proper amendment. I think, myself, the Saturday half-holiday will not work. I think you will have an agitation for some other day of the week, because people are accustomed to do their marketing on Saturday, and for that reason I do not think it would work at all. The next thing I desire to say is this: that in regard to the shops outside the towns it appears to me to be absurd to say the assistants there shall have a half-holiday. To say that the assistants in a country store shall have a half-holiday is simply laughable. The fact is that the assistant in a country store five days in the week has nothing to do.

Hon. MEMBERS.—Oh!

Sir R. STOUT.—He is out of doors, at all events, if he is doing any work. He is doing less work, I undertake to say, than any ploughman or farm-servant in the country; and it is therefore absurd to say that the shop-assistant in a country store shall have a half-holiday. Clause 7 is absolutely unnecessary. I can only say it would not do in a great number of country stores; and, if you do compel the assistants in those places to have a half-holiday, where are they to go? The thing is utterly unworkable. Well, then, clause 8 states that "All shops in a city, borough, or town district, except restaurants and eating-houses, shall be closed in each week on the afternoon of Saturday at the hour of one of the clock." I do not see why a coffee-house should be treated differently from a restaurant, yet "coffee-house" has been struck out by the Labour Bills Committee. I do not know that there is a distinction between them. A coffee-house is really a restaurant.

An Hon. MEMBER.—"Coffee-house" is struck out.

Sir R. STOUT.—I know it is, but I want to know why. I want to know why "coffee-house" should be struck out of the class that is exempted, and "restaurant" kept in. I submit that "fruiterer" ought to go in as well, because fruiterers' shops come under exactly the same category as restaurants. Then, another thing also is this: I see that the Bill is not to come into operation until after the general election. I suppose the intention in that is that people are not to know how it will work until after the election. That may be a very useful thing. But, at all events, I think that, in order to meet the objection made by the leader of the Opposition, clause 8 ought to be brought into operation before the Bill as a whole comes into operation, so that there shall not be a month of Saturday half-holidays, and afterwards a change to something else. No doubt the Minister in charge of the Bill will alter that, so as to meet the objection raised on that score. Of course, we are working on quite a different line from the Home Act, which simply says this: that the object of the Legislature is to look after the people who are employed as shop-assistants. That is the object of the English Act; but it does not deal with the days on which shop-assistants are to have a half-

holiday—it only deals with the hours of labour; and it expressly declares,—

"Nothing in this Act shall apply to a shop where the only persons employed are members of the same family, dwelling in the building of which the shop forms part or to which the shop is attached, or to members of the employer's family so dwelling, or to any person wholly employed as a domestic servant."

There it only practically hits at those who have a large number of assistants, and are in a big way of business, and I confess that seems to me to be the great trouble in this Bill. This Bill is going in the direction in which our factory system has gone—namely, entirely in helping the large places of business. That is the great difficulty I see in the Bill. It simply means this: Where you have large places—like, for example, the D.I.C., Kirkcaldie and Stains's, and so on, in Wellington—it encourages that class of establishment as against the small trader, because it says that if a shop employs no assistants, being only that of a small trader, it must be shut up along with the others. The effect of the Bill will be really to destroy the small shopkeeper, and to encourage the large shopkeeper. That is the great difficulty in connection with the Bill. How it is to be met I do not know. I hope it will be amended in Committee, and I presume, as it is late to-night, the honourable member will merely take a clause to-night, and go on with the rest of the Bill another evening. It is impossible to put it through to-night. Possibly, therefore, after getting a clause or two through, the honourable gentleman will see the advisability of adjourning, and going on with the rest of it another evening.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—I agree entirely with what has been said by the last speaker; but I do not think I shall take the course he purposes to take, because there is at present so much in the Bill that I think is radically wrong that I shall vote for the amendment. Still, I am quite willing to vote for the third reading if the Bill should be altered in Committee, as I think it should be, exactly in the direction pointed out by the honourable member for Inangahua. Sir, I cannot think of anything that shows less real concern for the welfare of the working-classes, or less desire to really elevate and improve them, than to propose, in the first place, that there shall be a compulsory half-holiday for that portion of the community which is perhaps less overworked than any other portion of the community you can find, and, when you turn them out unemployed, to leave the bars of the publichouses open to lead them into all kinds of danger and temptation. Unless the bars of the publichouses are to be shut up at the same time as other shops are shut up, then I shall vote steadily against this Bill in every stage. I think, too, that it is a very great hardship that those who are employed in small shops, where the labour is entirely done by the family, especially in country districts, should be compelled to close their shops. I think that is an exceedingly arbitrary step, and one that is

altogether unjustified. In fact, I entirely agree with the remarks made by the honourable member for Inangahua throughout, except that I shall vote against the Bill in its present stage, because it appears to me to contain so much that is wrong, and so little that is right, in its present condition; but, if the Committee should decide to close the bars, I will vote for the Bill on its third reading.

Mr. BUCKLAND.—I agree also with the last two speakers, and I shall vote in the same way that the last speaker said he would vote. One thing I would point out to the House is this: If there is to be a half-holiday, there is nothing more conducive to making it so, or more necessary for those who are having the holiday, than the opportunity to purchase fruit and cakes, or anything of that sort. You may make certain that in the large cities the people will go a little way out to spend their holiday, and they will want the opportunity of buying something in the way of refreshment. Perhaps the only opportunity of getting it will be at these shops that it is proposed to close. Perhaps they may want to get some apples at the seaside, but they will not be able to get apples, or anything of the kind, and it will be felt to be a great injustice to them in that way. The honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Shera) said this was a perfect Bill. But I believe he would say anything was perfect that was brought in by the Government until the vacant portfolio is filled up. I am quite certain that when that takes place he will be finding fault with the present Government: the whole position will be changed then. There is another thing I should like to say. The City of Auckland is a very large borough, and in the main streets of Auckland there are a great many large establishments, somewhat similar to those in Wellington which were mentioned by the honourable member for Inangahua just now. But Hobson Street, Wakefield Street, and the other by-streets are more or less one mass of shops each of which is, perhaps, kept by one family, living at the shop itself. Perhaps a widow woman with a family dependent upon her, or some person incapable of an active life, takes a shop, and earns a living by selling fruit or other small things. These people do not want the half-holiday, because they do a good business when the other shops are closed: they will tell you that a great part of their business is done on Saturday afternoons, or when the other shops are closed. Do you want to take away their means of livelihood? This would prove to be a great hardship. Then, there is the special case of the fruit-sellers. Their best trade in the large cities is on Saturday afternoons, when the people want to buy fruit for Sunday, and it is really a great hardship, therefore, to close the fruiterers' shops on that afternoon. There is another thing, which ought to be sufficient to show any one that the Bill is not a perfect one. A chemist can sell medicine on the half-holiday to a person if it is urgently required, but he has to keep his shop closed nevertheless. One may easily suppose that, in

the case of a boy running out for medicine in a case of emergency, he might take the shop to be shut up, and pass by, while all the time the poor chemist is compelled to sit inside with closed doors. What is the necessity for this? It seems to me that the Minister in charge of the Bill is afraid that one of them may sell a pennyworth of lollies if the doors are not closed. I think that is a very peculiar provision, and one that ought not to be tolerated. Then, with regard to country districts, he must not forget that a great many country districts are really town districts and boroughs, and it is extremely unfair to compel the shopkeepers in such places to close their stores, to the great inconvenience of people who may come from places twenty and thirty miles distant to get their supplies, and who may be in ignorance of the operation of this Bill. Take the case of Papakura, for instance. It is a town district, and yet I think there are only three shops there. What necessity would there be for closing these three shops? I cannot see it. Probably they take more on the Saturday afternoon than on the other five days of the week; and the application of the Bill in such districts as these would not only be a great inconvenience, but a great hardship. Take the case of Cambridge, in the Waikato. In that district now they close their shops on one afternoon in the week, and the unfortunate shopkeepers there sit outside on their doorsteps, and spend a miserable afternoon, simply because they are denied the opportunity of carrying on their business as usual. They do not want the half-holiday. In the case of many of them no assistants are employed, and yet they are compelled to lose an afternoon for no practical purpose. I can understand this Bill being quite a proper thing for shop-assistants who are kept in confinement the whole week and who want a little fresh air; but custom is growing up in the direction of making general a half-holiday, and I think it is very dangerous to interfere with it. There is another very serious defect in this Bill, and that is, this close half-holiday only applies to boroughs and town districts. In Auckland we have a large number of shops on one side of a street which forms the city boundary, the boundary of the borough running through the middle of the street; and consequently the shops on the other side are just outside the boundary. Now, if this Bill passes in its present form, the shops outside the boundary on the other side of the street would be able to keep open, while the unfortunate shopkeepers on the opposite side who will be obliged to close. I think it is so manifestly unfair that it ought not to be allowed to exist for one moment. I am quite certain there will be a very great outcry in the country directly the working-classes see the object of the Bill. I object to the Bill altogether, and to the compulsory clauses. I think it is not only illiberal, but grossly cruel to a large number of people; and I shall vote for the amendment.

Mr. WRIGHT.—Sir, the Bill before the House I think may very aptly be termed an

Mr. Saunders

advertising sheet for the benefit of the senior member for Christchurch City. We have been favoured with a great many Bills of this nature, but this one has a peculiar provision inasmuch as it is not to take effect until after the next general election. Therefore it is to be dangled before the eyes of certain shop-assistants to show them all the good things the Minister of Labour is prepared to do for them. But it is not to take effect until after the elections, so that all the drawbacks may not be experienced by those who will have to suffer from them. I have had numerous communications on the subject, but I will not trouble the House by reading them, with the exception of one or two. I will take a letter from the representatives of the Fruiterers' Association in Christchurch, because I think it speaks very clearly of the inconvenience to be suffered by these people:—

"We respectfully ask your consideration of the following facts *re* the Shop-hours Bill, and the disastrous effect it will have upon the fruiterers' trade should it be passed in its present form. It is a surprise to all fruiterers that the Bill should refer to their trade, they having understood that, dealing in perishable goods, they would be exempt. The result of the Bill in its present shape will be a most serious loss to both grower and salesman, particularly at the time when the more delicate fruits—raspberries, strawberries, &c.—are in season. Compulsory closing will prevent the salesman buying, and the grower picking, for two days; and consequently much of the best fruit will be spoilt. Either this, or attempts to evade the law by doing trade with only a pretence of closing, will be forced upon the trade. It is noteworthy that we employ no shop-assistants, and compulsory closing will throw much of our trade into the hands of the hawkers. We would earnestly request you to consider whether a law entailing great loss, and offering a premium to law-breaking, when no real necessity for that law exists, is not one from which more harm than good is certain to result."

That letter is signed "J. A. Hickmott," on behalf of the Fruiterers' Association. Then, I have had a petition sent to me from Ashburton enclosing resolutions passed by a gathering of about two hundred farmers and others, protesting against Saturday being the half-holiday. The gentleman who sends up the petition winds up his note in these terms:—

"There are many arguments against Saturday; but I will not trouble you further. I only want to say that during all the years I have been in this colony I never before felt so unsettled, so dissatisfied. Nothing is safe, nothing is permanent."

Then come other resolutions, which I will not waste the time of the House by reading. I intend to vote against the second reading of the Bill. I feel satisfied that the Bill is not likely to become law, and that we are only wasting time in discussing it.

Mr. McGOWAN.—Sir, this appears to me to be a measure which, whether it becomes law or not, or is passed by this Government or by

any other Government, deals with a question that must be faced at one time or another. The statements of those members who have criticized the Bill, or attempted to do so, were somewhat crude, and it appears to me they have not considered the objections brought forward. Let us take one or two statements that have been made with reference to the fruit-shops; we need not go any further. We can see in the Wellington streets how, if the fruit-shops were left open, those shops would develop into other shops. This trade is one—and not the only one—in which a large trade is done in other goods—in grocery goods, for instance—so that if exception were made in that direction we should see a great injury done to other trades. The laws of this country should not be made in the direction of injuring any part of the population, but they should be made to meet the case of the majority. I know of a large number of shops that perhaps employ one, two, three, or four assistants. If these shops were compelled to give a half-holiday to their assistants, perhaps the next-door shop, which employs no assistant but is worked by the shopkeeper's family, would get all the trade. It would be directed into that particular channel. We must all admit that would be unfair, and I think that the Government who face this question and endeavour to meet it deserve some credit. If I were asked to suggest a way by which the Bill could be improved, I would suggest that not only the shops but certain publichouses should also observe a half-holiday. In fact, as far as trade is concerned, the day should become like Sunday, and no trade should be permitted at all. That is the right and proper way to deal with such a question as this. I shall support the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. T. THOMPSON.—Sir, I do not agree with the honourable member for Ashburton in speaking of this Bill as an advertising sheet on behalf of the Minister who introduced it, because I have personal knowledge that there has been no Bill brought forward for years that has been more called for by the parties interested in legislation in this direction. I feel certain that, with some amendments which are necessary in it, the Bill will be a good and equitable measure. I do not agree with those who think that the fruiterers and greengrocers should not be exempt. I think, with a few amendments, the Bill should be made very workable, and for that reason I shall support it. The closing on Saturday will, I think, meet with the approval of the great majority of shopkeepers. The difficulty with the last Bill was that it left this an open question. I feel certain, if the Bill is altered in Committee, it will give general satisfaction.

Mr. R. THOMPSON.—I have very few words to say on this Bill. It has been so generally condemned by members on both sides of the House that it is unnecessary for me to do more than to express my regret that the time of the House is being wasted in discussing such a Bill as this. I fail to see any necessity for the Bill at all, or why Bills of the kind should be

thrust upon us. The time, which is now so limited, should be applied to more useful business; and I think that the Bill is not required at all. Personally it matters very little to me, or to my constituents, as it will not affect us much. I take, for instance, the principal township in my own district. Supposing this Bill were brought into force there: people must go up and go away on the tides. It is a tidal river, and when the tide is out it is impossible to get to the township even in a small boat; and, if the tide does not suit, settlers who, perhaps, have come some fifteen or twenty miles, and then find the stores closed on account of the holiday, will have to remain in the township until next morning. I would tell the honourable gentleman in charge of the Bill that he cannot have any idea as to the way it will work if it becomes law and if the penalties are rigorously enforced. It will practically be a dead-letter, except in the large centres. It is impossible to put such a Bill as this into operation throughout the country districts. I feel satisfied that the honourable gentleman has no idea as to the way this Bill will work. The Bill will cause a great deal of mischief and a great deal of harm to the working-classes; and I feel certain that the originators of this Bill, and those who wish to adopt such a measure, are the people who represent the large business houses. It is aimed at the small traders, and if the Bill becomes law I believe it will be the means of crushing and ruining a large number of working-people, who are engaged, themselves and their families, in carrying on small businesses. If the majority of members decide in Committee that the Bill is to become law, I shall certainly move, in the 1st clause, to strike out the word "January," so that the Bill may come into operation at once. If the Bill is to become law, people should have the benefit of it at once; I see no reason why its operation should be delayed until January next. I hope the Committee will support me in carrying that amendment. I say the Bill is a bad Bill, and I hope that those who believe in maintaining the present custom will assist me in the amendment I shall propose, and I hope those in both Houses who agree with me will vote for the amendment; otherwise I shall certainly vote for the amendment which has been proposed.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Sir, it seems to me an unnecessary thing to get up in order to condemn a Bill which has been so universally condemned already; and I think it is undesirable for us to take up the time of the House. I merely rise in order to record the fact that I object to the Bill in the strongest manner, as one of the most obnoxious pieces of legislation we have yet had proposed. I believe, too, it is hopeless to try to make the Bill satisfactory by amendment, as some honourable members appear to expect. I believe that we shall not be able to shake it into any decent shape even in Committee. I do not know why the Bill is brought in at all. I hoped to hear from the honourable gentleman who introduced the Bill some reason for its appearance. The

honourable gentleman got a measure passed last year dealing with shop-assistants, but it has been condemned, it is true, in almost every quarter. I take it for granted the honourable gentleman expects to cure the defects of that measure by this Bill; but the reason that Act has given dissatisfaction is that the community affected by it is hopelessly divided upon the question. One section of the community is in favour of the law being made compulsory, another section is against it. The hopelessness of our expecting by this Bill to produce anything like accord between these two sections of the community must be patent to every honourable member. The Bill of last year was a better Bill than this one, in so far as it at least left it to the community themselves to decide what day should be the half-holiday. Assuming that there should be a compulsory half-holiday at all, it left the particular day to themselves to decide. Generally speaking they did decide it, but not without a certain amount of irritation; but it is hopeless to expect that irritation to be removed by the present Bill, which makes a particular day compulsory.

An Hon. MEMBER.—No.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Well, it does so in the first instance. It first makes a day compulsory; then it gives the local bodies the power to remove the compulsion, so far as that particular day is concerned, in favour of another. The honourable gentleman, speaking somewhere in the country during the recess, said that all the defects of the Act of last session were due to the fact that his own particular Bill, as at first introduced, was not carried, and that he was going to introduce it again and thereby satisfy all parties. Here is the result, and this Bill is received with greater dissatisfaction than the last one. I think it was the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. Shera) who said that this Bill was introduced, in his opinion, on behalf not of the shop-assistants only, but of the shopkeepers also. If we can suppose, for an instant, that shopowners and shop-assistants regarded this proposed compulsory half-holiday with approval, the whole difficulty would be removed and no Bill would be necessary at all. But such, of course, is not the case. It is quite true that a large number of shop-assistants in the colony demand something in the nature of legislation for shop-hours, and I confess, so far as excessive shop-hours are concerned, I have always had a considerable amount of sympathy with them; but I believe they would cease to demand relief by any legal process if once they came clearly to understand what, in time, they will, I fear, be forced to understand—namely, that shorter hours will sooner or later bring with them a reduced wage: it must come, I fear. Now, when this is the case—when the shorter wage is introduced to meet shorter service—we shall have no right to say to private individuals in a free country, "You shall not work longer hours for a longer wage"—that is to say, as regards able-bodied men. We have the right to interfere on behalf of women or children in a matter of this sort, but it is monstrous to legislate for able-

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bodied men who are anxious to get on in the world, as every man ought to be, and say, "You shall not work certain hours for certain wages; you shall be compelled to take a half-holiday, whether you want it or not." It is a mischievous interference with private liberty, and tends in the direction of doing harm to the whole community rather than good. Then, it must be remembered that the shop-assistant demands legislation of this kind only so long as he is a shop-assistant, but so soon as he takes a step up in the world,—ceases to be a shop-assistant, and sets up for himself,—he will be against this proposal; he will be on the side of the small shopkeeper—they being almost unanimous against it. So that the more a man advances in life in this particular occupation the sooner will he object to the Bill, and find out the full disadvantage of it for himself. So much has been said about the inconsistencies of the Bill that I have no intention of going into them. It is of no use repeating what others have said; but, at the same time, one does feel that there is something radically wrong in the honourable gentleman's conception of a beneficial law, when he would introduce a Bill which has such a glaring inconsistency as that pointed out by the honourable member for Inangahua. Just fancy a condition of affairs in which we pander to the vicious, idle, and drinking habits of the community, by depriving the man who wants a glass of milk of the power to get it, while at the same time every provision is made to supply the man who wants whiskey and beer! Of course, in a free country a man should be able to get what he wants in reasonable hours; but it is surely a perfect marvel of foolish legislation to say that a man shall be denied the right to get a glass of milk or a little fruit, while the public-house alone is to be open to his wants. I am not in favour of compulsorily closing public-houses—that is, properly-conducted ones—any more than shops, but I do say, for consistency's sake and morality's sake, if you close all the harmless shops in the community on a particular day, you ought to close the public-houses as well—for drinking purposes I mean. The honourable member for the Thames appeared to me to be slightly astray in his first remarks on the Bill when talking about fruit-shops, and saying that they might develop into other shops.

Mr. MCGOWAN.—They do that now.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—The honourable gentleman said they might sell groceries and so forth. Might I ask him if he thinks it a crime for any individual to buy groceries at these shops?

Mr. MCGOWAN.—No; but it would be if you shut your next-door neighbour up.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—There is some force in the objection; but, for my own part, if I wanted groceries and could not get them at a grocer's shop, I should be very thankful to the honourable gentleman if he would let me get them at a fruit-shop. He forgets, however, that, on the same principle that the fruit-shops may develop into other shops, the publichouses,

when other shops are closed, will develop into other shops also.

An Hon. MEMBER.—You can provide against that in Committees.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—I think you will find, when it comes to inserting provisions, it is not so easy. It is a very easy thing to talk about putting provisions in a Bill to rectify an evil, but unfortunately it invariably happens, when you put in a provision intended to cure an evil, that you find it is apt to produce other evils which at the time you do not see. That has been the undoubted fact ever since we began to legislate on this particular matter, and I think it will be found to be so in this case also. Another inconsistency is that a man cannot get any form of drug for sickness, while at the same time he can go to the publichouse,—so careful has the honourable gentleman been, and always is, as it appears to me, to maintain the profits of the publican: actually not only is a man denied the chance of getting a little milk or fruit, but if he wishes to go to a chemist's shop for a useful or beneficial drug he cannot get it; but still he can get his grog at a publichouse. I cannot for my life understand it; the provision seems to me a positive monstrosity. There is one redeeming feature about the Bill that I do not think, in introducing it, the honourable gentleman foresaw. It will not do so much harm as some honourable members anticipate, because it will be largely inoperative. And the community would be perfectly right in largely ignoring it. For, after all, what is law? Put it any way you like, a statute—law—is simply public opinion armed with force to carry out its behests. Now, this is not public opinion. It is according to the honourable gentleman, and it might have been some time ago, before people began to see the full evils that would arise out of it; but it is not now. And, if it is now, will it be when it comes into force? Altogether, I believe it is a very judicious thing of the honourable gentleman to take care not to bring it into operation until the beginning of next year. As regards the country districts, if the country shop-assistants are compelled to take a half-holiday, all I can say is that, in some cases at least, I cannot imagine what they will do with themselves, unless they unfortunately flock to the hotels kept open for the purpose by the Bill. I cannot conceive what, in some instances, they will do with themselves to pass the time, for no one can say that, in such cases as I allude to, they are overburdened with work. Country shop-assistants, as a rule, get a good deal of spare time and of exercise.

Mr. REEVES.—That is the law now.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Then, may I ask why the honourable gentleman wants to duplicate it in the Bill?

Mr. REEVES.—Because, if the law ceases to be the law now, you must re-enact this part of it.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Well, all I can say is, if it is the law now, the country shop-assistants have never paid much attention to it.

I have seen little of the effect of the Bill for the last year in the country shops since it was introduced. Then, look at the condition that shipping would be in. Some honourable member pointed out, a few minutes ago, that shops that are kept for the purpose of supplying shipping with marine stores and so forth would also be closed up. A vessel might be in harbour ready to start, and, requiring certain articles, would not be able to get them, and would have to wait till Monday morning. A ship might be thus kept two or three days in port in order to be able to get what was required for the purpose of clearing away. I do not agree with this Bill or with last year's Act, and, while I have great sympathy with shopkeepers who have too long hours, my opinion is that public opinion is ample to cure the evil—that is, if the public are determined on it. The force of public opinion is sufficient to cure many of the evils, in the course of a little time, under which society suffers. Look at what can be done even unaided by the organized public opinion of an entire community—what a single man can do when he fairly takes work in hand. Look at what Mr. Stead, the editor of the *Review of Reviews*, has done by his own force alone; look at the changes he has brought about—the particular wrongs that have been rectified by bringing them before the public—the sinks of iniquity he has cleared out, all by merit of a determined will and power of expression which has been sufficient to attract public attention. It is a reflection upon the morality of the people of New Zealand to think that they could not bring in a paltry reform like this by the voice of public opinion—by united action—but that they must call in the help of a statute which brings in with it so many vexatious provisions, so many interferences with ordinary liberty, as this particular law does. Then, again, there is a provision for the usual Inspectors. Shops are to be inspected for the future, and, of course, there will be a number of Inspectors. I presume that we shall have a number of new Inspectors appointed?

Mr. REEVES.—Not one.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Not one! Then, Sir, that also will tend to render the Bill inoperative. If there are no Inspectors there will be no inspection; so in that respect the Bill also will be a fraud.

Mr. REEVES.—There are four hundred now.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Four hundred now? First we are told the Bill is the law now, then we are told there are no Inspectors, and then we are told there is an army of four hundred. No doubt it will go on increasing.

Mr. REEVES.—I said there would be no new ones.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—If the honourable gentleman would either cease interjecting or speak a little louder, I should feel obliged to him. An army of new Inspectors will be brought into existence, beyond all doubt. Some at any rate, will be appointed; and the shop-

keeper who is carrying on a harmless trade will be liable to have his shop entered at all times by an Inspector, in order to see that he is carrying out this law. Of course there will be the usual penalties. In fact, there is great danger of the labour legislation in this country—I should like to point that out to honourable members, especially to those honourable members charged with the interests of labour—there is great danger of having labour legislation in its entirety branded as vexatious, vicious, inimical to public liberty, by the nature of the Bills the honourable gentleman is bringing forward in the so-called interests of labour. The honourable gentleman's labour legislation will soon come to mean nothing at all but the appointment of Inspectors, the exaction of penalties, and pernicious interference with private liberty. I think that this Bill will work its own cure. I think it will work its own repeal. It may be as well to let the Bill become law as a method of doing wrong that good may arise from it. I am not going to do that. I never take inconsistent action of that kind in this House. I am going to vote for the six months—was it six months?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Only three months.

Mr. M. J. S. MACKENZIE.—Only three months! It should have been three years. I think to give this Bill only three months is treating it with an amount of respect that it does not deserve. Of course I shall vote for the three months, as we cannot vote for anything stronger or longer.

Mr. EARNSHAW.—Sir, I have been waiting to-night to hear what the labour members have got to say in defence of their Bill, and against the continued attack made by those gentlemen who do not favour this class of legislation. Their silence, I presume, is consequent on the flattening-out speech made by the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish) as against this measure. I only need to congratulate the Government on their *rapprochement* with this honourable gentleman, and on the final jump he has taken, in the hope that the Minister of Labour, whom he thinks so much of now, will come to his senses. But, of all the labour Bills that have come before this House, I do not think there is one that has given the labour members so much consideration, in order to bring in a Bill that would be practicable in its workings, as this Bill has given. Every one realised that the whole question bristles with difficulty, and those of us who are most strong in the determination that this Bill shall become law realise as clearly as do those gentlemen who oppose it, and from right motives, the difficulties that face us in framing a practicable measure. I do not think that the statements the leader of the Opposition made will at all be borne out in practice. He said it would be impossible to deal with a question of this kind without affecting wages, and also that there would be a loss of trade by having a Saturday half-holiday. I entirely dissent from that line of argument, and I venture to say that the purchasing-power of the people is not regulated

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at all by the shop-hours in any city or country district. It is simply regulated by the income of the people. If people are employed in a practical manner, and trade is healthy throughout the country, if our produce is bringing a good price in a foreign country, then the people will have a large purchasing-power; and I do not care if there was only one day in the week on which the shops were open, there would be as much volume of trade by virtue of this purchasing-power for the real requirements of the people as there would be if the shops were open every day in the week. I am one of those who recognise clearly and distinctly in the carrying of this Bill that a great number of small shops will go to the wall. I recognise that, and I do not think it is altogether a bad thing. It may be urged with a considerable amount of reason, of course, that these small shops are an avenue by which a man can enter into certain occupations and grow from smaller things to greater, and finally himself become a large employer of labour and the proprietor of a large business. Yet I venture to state that the price of goods is not at all reduced by having such a great number of small shops in a centre, and I believe that the nation as a whole would be benefited if, instead of this large number of small distributing businesses, we had a smaller number, and if the persons now occupied in connection with the others were employed on more remunerative work. Every person engaged in a distributing trade in a country necessarily must be kept at the expense of the producer and purchaser. But, of course, I quite realise that, under our present individualistic system, of which I am a determined opponent, it may be all right. Still, under another system, and a system that will come, that is coming day by day, and is coming fast enough to be practicable, perfect, and permanent, the day will come when we shall have, in the centres, very large distributing places, and no small shops at all. I have no objection, myself, to this Bill coming into force at once. I do not wish to wait, speaking personally, for the passing of this Bill till after the elections. I think it will be a very good thing to come before the elections. We have, so far as the main point of this Bill is concerned, the Saturday half-holiday in practical operation in Dunedin. The argument was used by the honourable member for Mount Ida—who made rather slighting remarks as to the poorness of this House, and who, judging by his dress to-night, was not long in the House, and has now gone out again—that if the shopkeepers and the shop-assistants are agreed the whole thing is solved. Well, that is just where the whole thing is not solved, because if nine-tenths of the shopkeepers are willing to close down, yet the few who, either from pressure of business or greed of business, keep open, can and do by their action break the whole thing down; and unless we can make all shopkeepers close down on special lines the whole thing will break down, from the greed of the individuals engaged in the trade, and who will not fall into line

with their fellow-shopkeepers. I wish to say a word or two with regard to the main question of the Saturday half-holiday. I look upon our present holiday—the whole of Sunday—as largely the result of the religious feelings of ages gone past. It is not altogether for rest or to recuperate the body, or to allow people to enjoy themselves; it is more purely for religious devotion. It is more from a religious point of view than for the benefit of health. But the question is, whether we should not have, apart from that day, one half-holiday, not only for rest itself, but for social recuperation; and I feel quite sure, even if we do not carry this Bill this session, within a few years it will undoubtedly become the practical law of New Zealand. I am quite prepared to run the gauntlet at the next election as to this being a proper thing to be carried into effect. As to having two half-holidays in the week, it simply amounts to this: The honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), with his usual insight into questions, asks, "Why cannot these men form cricket clubs and football clubs, and play amongst themselves?" That argument shows that he does not know our social arrangements at all. How could they play amongst themselves? You cannot get one class of people to go and play a game amongst themselves, and unless you make it a general thing the whole thing breaks down, and the people, instead of enjoying themselves, would go home, or lounge about the towns. I am speaking from a practical knowledge of what was the effect of the Saturday half-holiday in Dunedin. What did we realise there? Everybody on Saturday at noon-time was hurrying home with twice the speed he usually did, so as to be able to go to the seaside or to the bush. The whole thing was one gala day on Saturday afternoon. Instead of finding men drinking in hotels, the hotels were deserted; and I venture to say that not one-half of the drinking was done last year during the Saturday afternoons in Dunedin that there was when the holiday was not complied with. The whole experience of Dunedin this last summer was that St. Clair, the whole of the sea-beach, the Leith Valley, and other resorts were literally crowded with people who turned out to enjoy themselves. That itself brings up another argument, that, instead of the loss of trade which has been referred to, really it produces trade, because these people who go out dress themselves in better clothing, which simply means a greater call upon the millinery and clothing establishments, and the baskets of food they take with them—a better kind generally than that found on the tables of the houses—simply means a larger consumption of provisions; and, so far from the volume of trade being lessened, I venture to say it is increased. But I am not going to debate this Bill at length. I am strongly of opinion that hotels should be included in the provisions of this Bill. I, myself, think that it is not right that those places which are simply run for the retail sale of liquor, one of the worst things we have in our midst, should be allowed to be

open, and girls be kept behind the bars, while other businesses, that are for the good of the people, should be closed up. There is one other thing in this Bill that I have considerable doubts about—that is the question of the closing of the chemists' shops. That is a most difficult question to get over. For instance, in Dunedin the whole of the chemists, with the exception of one, believe in the Saturday half-holiday. There is one chemist who has persisted in keeping open, and the consequence is that the whole thing has broken down. On the other hand, I am free to confess that if the whole of the chemists' shops are closed there will be some considerable difficulty experienced by the public; and I think there should have been some provision made by which, in the large centres, there could be some kind of rota of the chemists' shops to be kept open, so that the people could know where they could go during certain hours. I think that in the large centres, where the chemists agree to close down, they might come to some compromise whereby one shop could be kept permanently open; and some little consideration might be given. With regard to the shopkeepers in the country not having their half-holiday, well, it might be true that in a number of shops the men have very little to do; but I think there is as great a number of shops where they have a great deal to do. And, then, you would have great trouble to draw the line between what are to be country places and what are to be town places or suburban places. I think you could not draw any clear line between them, and I think the concession given under clause 7, that they can take any day they like, is an ample concession. Now, there has been considerable talk with regard to the question whether the fruiterers should be exempted, and I agree with the argument that in the summertime, when the small fruits are ripe, which are exceedingly perishable, the fruiterers' shops should not be compelled to close; but this Bill clearly provides for that. The Labour Bills Committee thoroughly considered that, and clause 8 gives to the local bodies, which will be the governing bodies in this respect, every power to exempt fruiterers' shops and others of that kind. I trust the House will see its way to bring this Bill into law; and, while there is no doubt that a number of shops will be at a loss, yet I think the good that will ensue will far more than compensate for the loss. I do not think that the loss of trade in towns will be very much. There has been a great deal made, I know, in Dunedin of the idea that traffic on the railroads has fallen considerably since the Saturday half-holiday was initiated. That may be true, but it may be true also that, whilst in Dunedin the traffic has fallen off on that day, it is not altogether to the national advantage that we should only have one town, and that a country district shall have no shops at all in it. So far as reducing the amount of employment for labour is concerned, I am bound to say that if more of the shops were in the country districts there

would be more assistants than at the present time, rather than that the number would be reduced; and I think it would be an advantage to the settlers in the country districts, for this reason: that, while it is true that when they come into the centres the settlers may make a little per cent. more than they would do at a country shop, it is not to be forgotten that they get this advantage at a very great sacrifice, for they have to come into town to make their purchases, which, under other circumstances, they would purchase in their own districts. That might be a matter of average, and I do not think there is a great deal in that argument. I trust the House will not see its way to read this Bill this day three months. I hope it will be placed on the statute-book. This is practically an amending Bill. I find that in the four centres there is a considerable difference of opinion. Take, for instance, Dunedin—the only city that keeps the half-holiday on Saturday. It will become practically inoperative there unless this Bill is carried. If this Bill does not make a Saturday half-holiday permanent in the centres, I venture to state that, if this Bill is carried, Dunedin will revert from the Saturday half-holiday, and that it will take Wednesday. I may be wrong, but, as one who is a strong believer in the arbitrary half-holiday on Saturday, I think that, instead of that day, Wednesday will be the day if this Bill becomes law. I think the shopkeepers should have a strong voice in the matter, and if this Bill is carried they will have a considerable voice, because the local bodies nominate the Board, and, as every one knows, the great bulk of the representatives of municipalities really are more or less directly interested in trade, and therefore the *personnel* of the Board will be men who are closely connected with the business of the place. So far from this Bill making closing on Saturday compulsory, it will practically work the other way.

Mr. CARNCROSS.—I shall not delay the House many minutes. I only rise for the purpose of saying that I cannot see my way to support this Bill. I think the Bill already on the statute-book meets the present requirements; the matter of compulsory closing I cannot see my way to support. I think this measure is too far in advance of public opinion, and it will therefore be sure to bring its punishment with it. I know perfectly well that in some cities there is a considerable amount of irritation upon this subject at the present moment; and those shopkeepers who are opposed to this, if we irritate them still further, will simply say to their employes, "If we are compelled to close, your wages must suffer." I feel sure that would be the practical working-out of this measure, and I do not believe it to be in the true interests of the working-classes; therefore I cannot see my way to support it. Now, in my own district we had a weekly half-holiday before ever this legislation was put on the statute-book at all, and it worked very well; and I think that what I might call legislation of their own is very much better for the classes concerned than the compulsory legislation we

propose to adopt in the measure before the House. There is no irritation where there is a consensus of opinion, and everything goes on smoothly; but the moment we apply the iron law the shopkeepers will, to use a homely expression, "get their backs up." I have endeavoured, as far as I was able, to ascertain what was their opinion on the question, and I found that in the cases of the large shops they were in favour of it, but not the small ones. We have heard it stated in this House to-night that it would not do any harm if the small shops did go to the wall. Well, I would never be one to assist in sending them to the wall. Some of the best industries we have, have sprung from very humble beginnings; and I would not make one to assist in passing legislation which would have the effect of driving some of the small shops to the wall. It is not necessary to reply to all the arguments that have been adduced to-night. I rose simply for the purpose of saying that I would not give a silent vote, and to let the House understand why I could not support this Bill. I was rather struck with the argument of the honourable member for Mount Ida and the honourable member for Inangahua as to the occupation of country assistants. They really seemed to think that the every-day occupation of the country assistants was of the mildest of recreations; but I may say that these men have plenty to occupy them during the day. In many cases a man starts work at six o'clock in the morning, when he has to begin by feeding his horses, and is not finished before nine o'clock at night. If some of those honourable gentlemen who have spoken and said that the country assistants did not require a holiday had to do the same work they would be ready enough to take their half-holiday, and their views would, I am convinced, be considerably altered. I shall not be one to change the present state of affairs. In the closing remarks of the honourable member for the Peninsula he stated that the result of this legislation would be that, instead of the half-holiday being, as at present, kept on Saturday, it would be altered to Wednesday. I do not think he has very strong grounds for thinking in that way. In the case of some industries it might apply; but, if you consider for a moment, in the large industries where there is a large amount of machinery working it would be expensive to stop this machinery in the middle of the week; it would be much more convenient to stop it on Saturday afternoon.

The House divided on the question, "That the word proposed to be omitted stand part of the question."

AYES, 22.

Buick	Hutchison, W.	Tanner
Cadman	Kelly, J.	Taylor
Carroll	McGowan	Thompson, T.
Earnshaw	Meredith	Willis.
Fraser	Reeves	
Guinness	Seddon	<i>Tellers.</i>
Hogg	Shera	Pinkerton
Houston	Stout	Sandford.

NOES, 12.

Bruce	Mitchelson	Wright.
Carncross	Rollleston	<i>Tellers.</i>
Dawson	Saunders	Buckland
Duthie	Swan	Fish.
Lake		

PAIRS.

<i>For.</i>	<i>Against.</i>
Duncan	Kapa.
Harkness	Allen
Joyce	Hamlin
Lawry	Richardson
Mackintosh	Mackenzie, M. J. S.
Mackenzie, T.	Parata
McKenzie, J.	Fergus
McLean	Buchanan
Mills, C. H.	Valentine
Newman	Kelly, W.
Russell	Hall
Smith, E. M.	Rhodes
Smith, W. C.	Wilson
Ward.	Taipua.

Majority for, 8.

Amendment negatived.

On the question, That the Speaker do now leave the chair,

Mr. GUINNESS said,—I only wish to say a few words in support of this Bill, and I do so for this reason: that I disagree entirely with the remark made by the honourable member for Selwyn when he said the persons who are sought to be relieved by this measure are those less worthy of relief than any class of labourers in the community.

Mr. SAUNDERS.—The least overworked.

Mr. GUINNESS.—These shop-assistants have indoor work, and have not that amount of exercise which a labourer obtains outside, and I say they are worthy of as much consideration as the labourer working outside, and I say that particular attention should be paid by the Legislature to their health and comfort; and I think the great mistake of the Shop-hours Bill has been that many of the holidays for shop-assistants have been fixed for Wednesdays and Thursdays, and for other days in the week, whereas those engaged in banks, commercial pursuits, and professional business have a half-holiday on Saturdays. I say it is a great mistake in a town to have two half-holidays appointed. The main principle of this Bill—which I support—is that one day should be set apart for a half-holiday. I hope the Bill will pass. It is a very difficult matter to make a distinction between callings or trades in which it should and should not apply, but I think the Bill has been so carefully considered by the Labour Bills Committee that the House will not be doing far wrong in adopting most of the amendments in it.

Mr. REEVES.—I shall not exercise the right of reply to any extent. Certainly, after the debate which has taken place during the last three hours, I think it would have been tolerated that the mover should reply to the objections which have been raised against the Bill. But I am sorry to say that I am too unwell to make a speech of more than a minute

or two's duration. I have been obliged to leave the Chamber once or twice, and have been obliged to assume the attitude which so much infuriated the honourable member for Halswell. But that was simply because I was too ill to sit upright.

Mr. ROLLESTON.—I beg to apologize for the remarks I made. I was not aware of that.

Mr. REEVES.—I should like to make a speech worthy of this Bill, for I consider it a very excellent and worthy, and indeed a very noble, measure. A taunt was levelled against me to-night that this was an advertising measure, brought in because of the forthcoming general elections. I can only say that I assisted Mr. Perceval and the honourable member for Dunedin City (Mr. Fish), in 1890, to so remodel Mr. Hislop's Shops and Factories Bill as to produce a measure somewhat approaching this one, but a great deal more drastic. In 1891, when I had the honour of occupying a seat on these benches, I introduced a Bill going as far as this measure and a great deal farther, because it not only comprised the half-holiday, but also the principle of early closing. In 1892 I introduced a Bill which was virtually the same as this measure, with the exception of certain not very important differences; and now, in 1893, I try once more to introduce the measure, and I am told that I am simply bringing it in to advertise myself at the forthcoming general elections. Can any taunt be more undeserved?

An Hon. MEMBER.—Who said it?

Mr. REEVES.—The honourable member for Ashburton. I should say, if there is a Bill of all the labour Bills which is less likely to do me good at the general elections in the towns it is this Bill; because in the case of the other labour Bills there is almost no difference of opinion amongst the supporters of the Liberal party in the towns, but on this Bill there is a difference of opinion, although I believe there is a considerable majority who think this Bill a good one, and who will support it. Still, there is a strong minority against it. I do not think there is much capital to be made out of it in the way of votes. But, in any case, I am not going to turn my back on the Bill after fighting and struggling for it for three years. That it has been deserted to-night by one or two gentlemen who had previously supported shop-hours legislation, and from whom I might have expected faithful support to-night, is unfortunately the case. I do not judge their conduct—their constituents must judge that. Doubtless they have a right, as one honourable gentleman suggested, to change their minds. I am sorry I have lost their support; but I shall attempt to carry the Bill through the House without it. There are one or two points which I will try to notice, as briefly as possible. The honourable member for Mount Ida attacked the Bill in a strain part of which I expected, because it was consistent with the views he holds, as an individualist, and therefore to that part I shall make no reply. He also attacked the Bill from the point of view of the temperance reformer, a rôle which I thought

a somewhat novel one for that honourable gentleman to take up. He complained that it was a Bill which was going to prevent a man from getting a glass of milk, whereas it would almost force him to get a glass of whiskey instead. The Bill does nothing of the sort. If a man cannot get a glass of milk at a restaurant or eating-house that restaurant or eating-house must be a very extraordinary place, and one which very soon will cease to exist. If a man cannot get a glass of milk at all respectable hotels they must have changed their habits since I last entered one. I have yet to learn that a man is forced to drink spirits in a hotel in preference to milk, water, or tea. But, however, that argument may be disposed of as a piece of simple claptrap. Then, there is the argument of the honourable member for Inangahua, that the Bill is grossly unfair, inasmuch as it is a Bill which, he said, will tend to suppress the small shops in the interests of the large ones. It is not a Bill to do anything of the kind, nor will it, I think, make any appreciable reduction in the number of small shops. I would be no party to a measure which would inflict upon shopkeepers who comply with the Act a certain loss of trade and business. But, then, neither will I be a party to a measure which says to a shopkeeper in a large way, "Because you commit the crime of employing labour and paying it you shall shut up, while your neighbour, who works the members of his own family, and probably does not pay them, may keep open, and so flech your trade from you." No doubt, if such a Bill became law, a class of shops would come into existence in order to trade upon the sufferings of the larger shops. Why should a man be treated harshly because he employs labour? I would rather not interfere with the smaller shopkeeper, but in order to be anything like a just Bill it must go somewhat on the lines of this Bill; and, in my belief, this measure will not seriously affect many of the small shopkeepers. I have come to that conclusion after careful inquiry. Then, there is an objection that the Bill is a farce, and laughable, because it says that the assistants in shops outside cities and boroughs shall have a half-holiday. Will it be believed that that laughable and ridiculous clause—described as not worthy of argument because it is so absurd—has been the law for nine months past? Has it caused any of those ridiculous and laughable effects which have been so strongly commented on? We are told that these shops are all up-country stores. Good heavens! all the shops outside the cities and boroughs are up-country stores! What an extraordinary statement! Why, the great difficulty I have had to face in drafting this Bill has been to know what to do with the very large number of ordinary shops outside the limits of cities and boroughs, and which are not up-country stores. Some of the bitterest outcry has come from people inside the towns and boroughs, who say that the trade and business is being taken away from them because the Act does not apply to shops outside town districts. No, Sir; if I am doing

Mr. Reeves

wrong it is in not making the Act extend to a mile, say, beyond the boundaries of cities and boroughs. After careful consideration, I thought it better not to do so. Then, there is the argument, and I think it a fair and legitimate argument, brought to bear by the honourable member for Auckland City (Mr. T. Thompson) and the honourable member for Marsden, about the necessity of supplying stores to vessels bound to quit ports in tidal rivers. That is a fair point, and I will endeavour to meet it in Committee. Also as regards the special order, and the fact that it takes four weeks to carry it out, and that that would produce delay: I will endeavour to meet that too. As regards the taunt that I am bringing this Act into operation on the 1st January because I am afraid of its coming into effect before the general election, I may point out that I did the same with the Factories Act, with the best results. As this Act will interfere with people's habits and business in the same way as did the Factories Act, I shall only doing in regard to it as I did in that case. I venture to say there

has not been one word of condemnation with regard to my action on the Factories Bill, and neither would this matter have been heard of if some honourable members had not reflected that the general elections might come before January. It may be so; but it is not certain when the elections will take place. I should have liked to meet some of the arguments that have been used during the course of this debate, but I feel physically unable to do so to-night. I shall therefore at once move the Bill into Committee, and I shall then move to report progress.

Mr. FISH.—Sir, I desire to make a personal explanation. During the course of my speech I referred to the absence from the chamber of the honourable gentleman. He has now explained that that absence was caused by illness, and, had I known it was caused by any faintness on his part, I should not have made the remarks I made.

Bill committed, and progress reported.

The House adjourned at five minutes past two o'clock a.m.

END OF EIGHTY-FIRST VOLUME.

